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C E M JOAD

More Opinions

Philosophy, Time, Pain and the Unconscious

On Manners and Conventions

On Women

Marriage and Family Life

On Happiness, Love, Virtues and Vices

Leisure, and some ways of spending it

Youth and Age

Some Personal Prejudices

Festivals and Food

On Travelling Abroad

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Philosophy, Time, Pain and the Unconscious

Philosophy and Life

I have said elsewhere and I will venture to repeat again here, that philosophy, so far as I can see, confers no benefit upon those who pursue it. It does not make you a good business man, help you to acquire fame and fortune, have success with women, or to be a nicer person. It does not make you a better character; it does not miraculously endow you with that desirable attitude to life popularly known as the philosophic outlook, thus enabling you to bear the toothaches and pimples of experience more easily than the non-philosopher.

The philosopher is just as likely to swear when he breaks a boot-lace or misses a train or to grieve when he is jilted by his mistress as the plain man, and he is certainly no better at keeping his wife in order, or making her happy. Just as likely and no better, but also not more likely and certainly no worse.

Nor is there any substance in the popular conception of the absent-minded philosopher. The fact that a man is a philosopher no more fits than unfits him for the conduct of affairs.

It follows that whether he can do business or not depends upon whether he has common sense, energy, initiative, organising ability, power of judging men, sense of affairs, and all the rest of the qualities upon which business men pride themselves, and not upon his being a philosopher.

For example, I am a philosopher, but I do not doubt that I possess

most of the qualities I have just mentioned. I have always found business relations easy, and have spent a good deal of time trying to make business men—who *will* talk about ideals and benefiting humanity and social purposes as they try to persuade me what benefactors to the community they are, when their real concern is not to be benefactors but to make money out of being benefactors—try, I say, to make such men come off their high moral perches and talk £ s. d. “You,” I have to say to them, “are an artist, or a social theorist, or a public benefactor, or a great editor, or a beneficent publisher; you, of course, think about everything and anything except money, but I am only a poor philosopher who has to live by his wits, and you will, I know, excuse me for affronting your elevated feelings by asking you, ‘how much?’ ”

Philosophers and Money

It follows, of course, that philosophers are neither more nor less interested in money than other people. I do not, indeed, think that as such they have any distinctive attitude to money. Socrates, it is true, refused it. He would not, he said, take money for dispensing wisdom. Plato despised it; so did Aristotle. They ranked business men, whose object in life is presumably making money, with employees in the lowest class of the community.

So far as I know, no other philosopher has exhibited a distinctive attitude to money, except Shaw, who has insisted that money is the beginning and end of all the virtues, and poverty the first and foremost of all the crimes.

“All the other crimes,” says Andrew Undershaft in *Major Barbara*, “are virtuous beside it: all the other dishonours are chivalry itself by comparison. Poverty blights whole cities; spreads horrible pestilences; strikes dead the very soul of all who come within sight, sound, or smell of it. . . . Only fools fear crime: we all fear poverty.”

An exaggeration? No doubt. Yet Shaw is only making the obvious point that most of the virtues are denied to us if we are starving; a poor man cannot, for example, afford to be honest, still less generous.

In an ideal society we should not have to think about money one way or another. We should be able to take the possession of an adequate amount of it for granted as we do in the case of air, light, and water.

So much for the philosophers! Speaking as a sensible man, I should advise everybody to get as much money as he can. Money is not only, as I was suggesting, a condition of virtue; it is also a necessity for freedom – freedom to speak your own mind and to go your own way. Necessary for virtue and freedom, money is also an assistance to wisdom. Nevertheless, I think it is wrong for young men to bother too much about money. None of the ways in which you most enjoy yourself when you are really young costs much; making love does not cost much, nor does tramping over the hills and far away, nor does playing games. It is only when you get older that you want money. Old people want to be comfortable and want to be warm, and both cost money.

To quote Dr. Johnson: "Power pleases the violent and the proud; wealth delights the placid and the timorous. Youth, therefore, flies at power, and age grovels after riches." Now, most philosophers are old men; I am a comparatively old man, and therefore, given our society as it is, I should be the last to under-rate the importance of money.

A Car Accident

I am asked whether in a car accident in which I was once concerned I retained my philosophic outlook while the car was skidding out of control into the ditch. I find it very difficult to answer such

a question because I have not the faintest idea what a philosophic outlook is. I did, however, have time to indulge in what the reader might be pleased to call philosophic reflection.

I experienced the usual sensation, in moments of crisis, of the immense prolongation of time; that is to say, a period of time, which amounted, at the most, to a couple of seconds, prolonged itself into an immense tract of my personal experience.

During that couple of seconds the car waltzed round once or twice on the glazed surface of the frosty road before coming to rest quietly lying on its side in the ditch.

During that immense tract of experience, which was yet a couple of seconds, I quietly contemplated what was happening, speculated upon what was going to happen, wondered whether I should be too late for my meeting, wondered whether the car would go through the fence into the field, wondered whether I should be hurt, and, if hurt, how and where.

Then I started to reflect on Dunne's "Theory of Time," which I can't talk about now, but which starts from this notion of the relativity of time. What is "the present"? Is it a moment of time measured by your watch, or is it something that you feel? If something that you feel, then the duration of what you call the present will vary enormously according to the nature of your experience. The more intense your experience, the longer the span of time which you are prepared to regard as "the present," extends. It is almost as if life, which gives extra power to the limbs and muscles in moments of danger, gives added intensity to the mind, so that thinking twenty times as quickly as you normally do, you find what you call "the present" extends over twenty times the span of time that it normally does, and, of course, as your "present" is longer, you have more time in it in which to act.

I do not for a moment expect the reader to believe me, but all these thoughts, or something like them, passed through my mind while I waited for the car to finish its entertainment of slowly,

quietly, gently, and all in its own good time, pitch-forking me and my companions into a ditch.

Reflections in the Dentist's Chair

I found myself thinking about time, too, when I sat recently at the mercy of the dentist. About time, and about how time varies. You spend three minutes in the dentist's chair, having your teeth drilled, and you take it to be twenty. In other words, fear and pain make time last long. You meet your girl for a stolen ten minutes, and it seems like one; you are a schoolboy dreading the return to school, and the last week of the holidays flicks by in a day. Ecstasy and happiness make time short.

If there is no such thing as a single, uniform time, what is it our watches measure?

Difficult to say. Presumably it measures the same thing, whatever it is, as we measure by our own time sense, which keeps time for us when we are asleep. I go to bed saying to myself that I must wake up at seven, a revolutionary event, as I usually rise at nine, and I duly wake up at seven. Similarly, on a long walk I find I can guess the time almost to a moment, and usually win bets from other people in competitions at time guessing – I have more to say about this below. Now this time sense seems to me to be largely unconscious and is different from the sense with which consciousness measures time which, as I began by saying, is immensely variable.

The time I *consciously* measure is not something flowing on outside me, but is simply the interval between events. Since there must be something for the unconscious time sense to measure, there must be time. Conclusion! It is with our unconscious and not our conscious time sense that we really make contact with reality.

I thought also about physical pain, which seems to be the worst of all possible evils. All the arguments to the contrary, to the

effect that it is not real, that it can be overcome, that it is possible for the mind to achieve such a mastery over the body that pain is not felt, or if felt, does not matter, and that mental pains are anyway worse, are the most outrageous of all the fallacies by means of which men's hypocrisy seeks to impose upon their credulity.

What are the reasons for the hypocrisy? The first, I think, is Christianity, which has always insisted that the soul is important and the body is not. Therefore nothing that happens to the body is important. More deep-seated is the instinct that we all have to buy off the terrible thing by pretending that it is not so terrible after all. I would like to take those who maintain that superior dreadfulness of mental or emotional pains, tie them up naked to a post and jog them at carefully chosen places, and carefully selected intervals, with a red-hot poker, and then see if they would not be prepared to put up with any possible quantity or degree of mental pain, provided only that the treatment should stop.

I know, of course, that thousands of human beings have suffered, and have deliberately chosen to suffer, the worst intensities of bodily pain rather than prove false to their convictions or betray their cause. Yet I also know that for everyone who has stood firm, tens of thousands have given in, and (I put the confession frankly on record) I simply do not understand how they did stand firm. Passing on, my mind proceeded to enquire why we have special tooth-doctors called dentists? Because, I understand, the size of the human jaw has shrunk while the number of teeth it contains remains constant. An ape has a much larger jaw but no more teeth. Hence our teeth are squeezed together.

Why the smaller jaw? Partly, perhaps, because we do not use our jaw to tear raw food, but more because of the exaggerated development of our skulls. The larger skull is the case which contains the larger brain, and the larger brain is apparently the foundation for the more intense consciousness. Man, in other words, has developed his consciousness and his intelligence at the expense of his body,

and his body pays him out by giving him bad teeth in a constricted jaw. This suggests that there may be a necessary limit to the advance of man's intelligence so long as he remains tied to his present body. If our brains are to grow any larger or any more complicated, they may demand a different kind of body to support them.

Another reflection passed through my mind. How absorbing is my interest in and respect for my dentist, an interest and respect amounting almost to awe. I am consumed with a desire to know how and where he spent his holidays, how he grows his tomatoes, where in peace-time he buys his wine, how his children are getting on at school, and so on. . . .

Now my dentist is an admirable man, but is he really as interesting as all that? And his children? Normally I feel the profoundest indifference for other people's children, and cannot understand why my acquaintances should insist upon telling me about them – but here am I actually looking at the photographs of my dentist's children. Well, now why? Answer: I suppose fear, and the desire to propitiate the formidable or fear-evoking person. The dentist for the moment is my deity. He holds for me not so much power of life and death, but the even more terrible power of pain, and if I show interest – or rather if I feel interest – for there is no hypocrisy about it – I shall somehow propitiate him, win myself into his good graces, and perhaps he will not hurt me so much.

Time and the Unconscious

But to revert for a moment to the question of time and in particular to its measurement while asleep. Is there any ground, I am asked, for the common view that it is possible to wake up at any desired hour by mentally resolving to do so?

It is easy enough to reply at once, "Yes, of course, there is. And don't we all know it and do it?" But more difficult to explain

why. I hate to invoke that over-worked and abused word, the “unconscious,” but I can’t avoid it here. The trouble, by the way, about the unconscious is that we know so little about it, that we are at liberty to invent what we please.

In fact, in one sense we know *nothing* about it, because if we knew things about it, inevitably what we knew would have to be conscious – otherwise we wouldn’t know it – which means that what we knew would not be about the unconscious at all, but only about the presumed effects of the unconscious in consciousness.

Why, then, believe in the unconscious? Here is an example of my own experience. Last spring I was walking up and down the furrows of a field dropping potatoes. After an hour of it I straightened my back at the end of one furrow and noticed that I was whistling. What was it? For a moment I could not place the tune, and then suddenly remembered it as a song about the potato famine in Ireland in the middle of the last century – a song which to the best of my knowledge I hadn’t heard for 20 years.

Notice that I didn’t first think of the song by conscious association because I was dropping potatoes and *then* start whistling it. I suddenly noticed I was whistling it and realised that I had been whistling it for some moments past.

Now what put the song into my head, or rather on to my lips? What, in other words, made the connection between the potatoes I was scattering and a song about the potato famine? Obviously not consciousness, because I had started whistling before I realised that I was. Then we must suppose that there is some part of the mind which works more or less like the conscious in that it makes connections and thinks thoughts without our knowing it. It is this part of the mind which is presumably responsible for our dreams, for, when we are asleep, consciousness goes out of action, yet quite clearly some part of us is active and doing the dreaming which we remember when we wake up. In fact, when we are asleep the unconscious is more active than usual precisely because none of our

available psychic energy is being used up by conscious experience.

Now it is this something which keeps the time. For me, it keeps time even when I am not asleep, that is to say I know within fairly close limits at any moment of the day what the time is without looking at my watch, even if, for example, I am walking in the country and have not seen a watch or kept an engagement, or done anything to mark the time for several hours. It is the same something which will help to solve our problems for us, or, at least, enable us to get them in perspective, and see them in a new light, if we only take care to remit them to it before we go to sleep.

Tacitus says that the Germans, when they had a decision to make, always considered the matter first when drunk, and then when sober, and if they came to the same decision each time, knew it must be right.

I don't think it is absolutely *necessary* to get drunk, so I would amend this to an obligation to consider the problem last thing at night, then, as we say, to sleep on it, which means remit it to the unconscious, and finally to consider it again in the morning when the unconscious has been at work on it during sleep. And again, if the answer is the same on both occasions, you can be fairly sure it is the best answer you can give.

Silent Meditation

Sleep, then, helps the unconscious to function, and so sometimes assists in the solution of a problem. Periods of silent meditation, too, are excellent for the study of a problem, and so good for mankind. The reasons? Well, considering the question purely on a mechanical level, take the engine of a car. Every so often it wants decarbonising. If the by-products, the clinker and ash, of its day-to-day working are not cleaned out they presently choke the engine.

Apply the analogy to ourselves. Most of us at all times, but

especially at this time, pass our lives with our faculties stretched nearly to breaking point. The world is on top of us, stimulating us, provoking us, annoying us, driving us, entertaining us, and all the time we are feeling and desiring and thinking.

In fact, we are so busy thinking that we have not time to stop and think. Consequently we lose perspective; we forget which are the things which loom large merely because they are close.

But if we were to look at our life as a whole, take a bird's-eye view of it, as it were, from a distance, things could be seen in their proper perspective. I am merely embroidering the truth contained in the proverb about not seeing the wood for the trees. How important, then, that there should be a vantage point in our lives from which we can take a view of the wood. Such a point is provided by what the religious orders call "retreat." In my view, every man ought to be compelled by law to take a year's holiday with pay at 40.

I have begun the answer to this question on the worldly level, but there is, I suppose, a deeper one. Most of those who go into retreat for silent meditation have been imbued by a strong religious conviction that there was another world. If our spirit belongs to and derives from another world, we ought sometimes to attend to our other worldly connection. There is a parable, is there not, to the effect that God speaks in a still small voice, and it is only in the silence that we can hear Him. Well, a retreat is a device for enabling you to hear Him; instead of doing and talking, we sit still for once and let Him talk to us. If, then, you believe in God, the arguments for occasional retreat assume a new significance.

Melancholia in Spring

All of us have experienced the sadness which suddenly overtakes us on a fine spring day. We are revelling in the fresh beauty of

nature rejuvenated, when a gentle melancholy seizes us. How curious, we think, and why does it?

Spring, I suggest, is the time of renewal, including the renewal even of the body. Profound chemical changes take place, the rate of replacement of old tissues increases. Inevitably there is a repercussion of these changes in the mind; new hopes, new desires, new longings – above all, a demand for variety in life. Spring is the time when all the haunting romance of the line “Over the hills and far away” comes home to a man.

Spring is the time when a man wants a new job, a new way of life, above all, perhaps, a new girl. That, then, is the challenge. How do we meet it? Most of us don’t meet it at all. We proceed to live the same way of life we live in the winter; the same old round, the train, the office, the train, and home again; the bus, the factory, the bus, home again, the cinema; as it was in the beginning, as it was in winter, as it is, indeed, all the year round, as it will be, God help us, in the end. The demand is, then, for safety, and we respond with monotony. Life renews itself and stimulates us to novelty; yet we can only respond to the new call in the old way.

Hence a sense of frustration, hence a sense of sadness. One is not meeting the challenge; one is not rising to the opportunity; one is not giving way to the call in the blood; hence the inexpressible longings for we know not what, the sense that we are somehow missing something – we cannot say what it is, but we know that it is a great glory which is waiting for us just around the corner, a corner that we shall never turn.

Genius and Eccentricity

Certain, shall I say “chosen,” individuals have been able to respond to those longings in life, to meet the challenge squarely – they are those individuals we call geniuses. Theirs is the great glory, for they

have turned that corner. We take it out of them for this by dubbing them "eccentric" and then ask foolishly whether eccentricity and genius should go together.

By "eccentric" I suppose one means merely beings unlike most of the human beings who are living in the same society at the same time as oneself. From this point of view, the greatest genius who ever lived is nine-tenths or ninety-nine-hundredths ordinary, and only one-tenth, or, it may be, one-hundredth genius; and the ninety-nine hundredths ordinary parts of him want the same things as wholly ordinary people: money, comfort, and affection, a secure home, and a respected position in society.

Now, original art and original thought, just because it *is* original, is bound to seem shocking and destructive – bound to outrage the standards and the values of most people, who, of course, being shocked, resent it. While they are content to allow the original artist in paint or sound or words to starve to death in a garret in the usual way, they will punish the original thinker in morals, politics or religion with all the rigour of the law, crucifying him, or poisoning him, or burning him, as they crucified Christ, poisoned Socrates, or burned Savonarola.

This consciousness of opposition and dislike by people with whom ninety-nine hundredths of him wants to be on good terms drives the genius into himself and makes him odder and more awkward than he would have been if allowed to grow and develop in his own way.

On top of all that, of course, there is the fact that, because he *is* a genius he is concerned with the eternal verities, a new vision of beauty, a new conception of truth, a new view of the way in which human beings ought to live as individuals or in which societies ought to behave. Hence he is not as much interested in ordinary things as ordinary people. He does not, therefore, care very much about property, or clothes, or "keeping up with the Joneses," whereas, of course, his wife, who is a perfectly ordinary person, does. How

badly geniuses have, therefore, got on with their wives. Take, for example, the case of Tolstoy leaving his wife at the end of many years of married life, because she could not share his views about pacifism, or the morality of property, or whatever it might be.

And being indifferent to ordinary things makes the genius behave in an unordinary way. Beethoven when composing used to walk about the room pouring coffee out of a coffee-pot on to his hands, and inevitably, therefore, on to the floor. Turgenev used to sit at an open window with his feet in a bath of hot water. The open window stood for his vision of the world of men, the bath, of hot water for the warmth and flow of his internal inspiration.

Thus, the fact that a man *is* a genius means that he will tend to be eccentric. But there are no rules. Bach, with his dozen-odd children, his two wives, his intense respectability, his concern over his salary, his complete obliviousness of the fact that he was inspired, is an example to the contrary. So is Trollope, turning out his regular 2,000 words every morning by the clock before he set about his duties as a competent and respected Civil Servant. So, too, incidentally, are Hume and Gibbon.

An Introduction to Philosophy

And since this chapter does purport to deal with philosophy, I am asked to recommend three books for those wishing to study it.

First, let me recommend "Problems of Philosophy," by Bertrand Russell, in the Home University Library, which indicates the modern approach to philosophy.

Secondly, "Plato's Republic," translated by A. D. Lindsay and published by Dent, which is, in my view, the most important single work of philosophy that exists.

Thirdly, if I may venture to commend a book of my own, "Guide to Philosophy," which is a general account of the sort of problems that philosophers discuss and why they discuss them.

On Manners and Conventions

Can Manners be Taught?

I wasn't the only one to be surprised when I read that Mrs. Bernard Shaw had left £150,000 in her will for the express purpose of improving people's manners. Here was a life-long Socialist leaving this vast sum of money for what? To enable the democratic many to ape the manners of the aristocratic few.

I am asked whether I think courtesy and good manners are on the decline to account for this bequest.

It depends, of course, on what one means by good manners. I mean by them a willingness to please people and to please them in their own way and not in mine; good manners in this sense entail, it is obvious, many small sacrifices. In this sense they have clearly declined. Why? Because of the rush and hurry of life in the modern world; it is a world in which we are all trying to save time, yet there have never been people who have so little time to spare as we who are always trying to save it.

Now, good manners are a product of leisure. When you are always hurrying in pursuit of your own purposes you tend to forget not only those of other people but the purposes for the sake of which you hurry. Peoples who don't live in the 20th century western world have known this truth very well. Consider, for example, the African native porters who, when chidden by their British overseer because they sat down and insisted on resting on the march, replied that they had gone so fast that they were now

waiting for their souls to catch up with them. Or take this from the sacred book of the Chinese religion of Taoism: "If a man desires too much or overworks and does not rest in time, the result will be the illness of Time. If he cannot control his passions he will get older and older, and the result will be the illness of Age. The first step for a man who wishes to be a candidate for immortality is to keep life easy, the mind untroubled, time spacious, and the body young, since neither mind nor body has any inherent defect or trouble." In other words, do as little as you can. Of course, the native porters and the Chinese are right.

Take myself, for instance. How criminally I let myself, through taking on too much work, degenerate into an inhuman, over-driven drudge. I snap at people over the telephone because I haven't the time to answer them properly; I write short, angry letters because I haven't time to write courteous, patient ones. I am not being particularly humble about this; most people to-day seem to me to be no better than I am.

You have only to look at the manners of people in shops. It isn't merely that they don't want your custom; it is that they are so short-staffed and overdriven that they can no longer tolerate the sight of human beings in the shape of customers. Or look at the manners of many women. There was, for example, the case of the tramp who went into the "George and Dragon" and asked for a glass of water. The harridan behind the bar said: "We don't give water to tramps." The tramp went away and half an hour later timidly poked his head in again at the door. "What do you want now?" asked the harridan. "I want to see George," said the tramp.

I suppose the extreme example of people in a hurry is that of a crowd stampeding for the exits when a cry of fire goes up in a cinema. They all want to get out, and get out as quickly as possible. Theirs is also the extreme example of bad manners. They trample one another to death.

No doubt if one wants to shine socially, the thing can be taught.

You can be taught, for example, to speak properly, which is very important. My accent is all right – that is to say it's Oxford – but I used to produce my voice abominably until I went to a teacher who taught me how to speak loudly and clearly without tiring my voice. She can also remodel your accent.

But apart from accent it is difficult to teach manners, partly because few people will ever admit their own manners are bad – for most of us the definition of bad manners is simply the manners of other people – partly because we are so sensitive about them, and are apt to be much more impatient of criticism of our manners than of our morals.

Again, a large part of manners is an expression of one's personality. Take going into a room. Oxford men (or is it Cambridge?) walk into a room as if it belongs to them. Cambridge men (or is it Oxford?) walk into a room as if they didn't care a damn who it belongs to. Both, I presume, are undesirable as modes of entry, but both difficult to eradicate because they express the personality. On the other hand, how to get out of a room is something one can learn. Hundreds of people don't know this and hover and haver around the door, half in and half out of it, uttering inane remarks because they don't know how decently to bring their conversation to an end.

Much of what goes by the name of bad manners is due to excessive gentility. It is, in other words, precisely those who wish to shine socially who give themselves away by aping what they believe to be the manners of the class to which they wish to be thought to belong. It is gentility, I think, that causes wives to refer to their husbands by their surnames. "Mr. Smith," they say, "is doing so-and-so," when, in fact, the upper classes say, not "Mr. Smith," but "John," or "my husband." It is gentility, I think, that causes women to profess themselves superior or indifferent to food, pecking away at salads, nibbling genteelly with their front teeth, and, when they drink a cup of tea, curving the fourth and fifth fingers of the

hand genteelly away from the cup in order to indicate their delicacy and desire to withdraw themselves as far as possible from the contaminating contact of food. There is no harm, of course, in all this for you and me, but for those who do these things there is, since these are the ones who desire to shine socially, and these are precisely the sort of things that stamp one socially, producing exactly the opposite effect to that which is intended, since the upper classes, who are largely unconscious of their manners, eat and drink with a natural grossness, and refer to wives and husbands with a natural familiarity.

Now, of course, you can be taught not to say "Mr. Smith" when you mean "John," or "your husband," and you can be taught, for what it is worth, to grip your teacup hard with all four fingers and thumb. But is all this worth teaching? Is this a good use to make of £150,000? For my part I prefer education to manners, the cultivation of the mind to the graces of the body, and should have thought that a year in a Workers' Educational Association class would be of greater assistance in the art of living and good citizenship than years of instruction by professors of deportment directed to turning honest working folk into imitation gentlemen and ladies.

On the Dead and Manners to the Dead

Do good manners demand that we should always speak and think well of the dead?

Let me first try to answer the question in its bearing upon the world which I know best, the world of literature – and I suspect that, perhaps, what I say is true in the world of journalism – in which we all feel warmly towards the dead, because they are no longer our competitors. At the same time, however, there is a contrary tendency in each age – I am still speaking of the literary world – to look down its nose at its immediate predecessor – children,

I suppose, reacting as usual against their parents. For example, the years after the last war were devoted to the belittlement of the then recently dead Victorians. A man of genius, Lytton Strachey, led the fashion with "Eminent Victorians" and "Queen Victoria," but he was followed by a whole troop of imitators who stuck pins into the lay figures of the great Victorian reputations and were delighted to observe the bran and a little sawdust which came trickling out. We are at the same game to-day in regard to our immediate predecessors. Who, to-day, reads John Galsworthy, or even Arnold Bennett?

Meanwhile, however, the wheel turns a full circle and the not-so-recently dead, the Victorians, are coming into their own again. At the moment there is a boom in the novels of Anthony Trollope – to what a safe, secure, sunlit world of prosperous clergymen and Civil Servants he introduces us – and, of course, Charles Dickens, who, I suppose, never really went out at all. Thus each generation takes the gods of its grandfathers off the shelf on to which its parents have shovelled them. When we come to the "long dead," then I can see no reason why we should not pass a completely dispassionate judgment.

Should we speak well of the dead? But what about Attila, Genghiz Khan, or Torquemada, Ivan the Terrible, power-loving, ruthless men who in the pursuit of their ambitions – or in Torquemada's case to the greater glory of God – consigned hundreds of thousands of their fellow creatures to starvation, slaughter, misery, agony, and death. Are we to speak well of them? Will historians in the future find it necessary to speak well of Heydrich, Himmler, and Hitler? I sincerely hope not. But I think that we should speak well, as well as we can, of the just dead, partly that we may not hurt their friends, relations, and lovers – and partly out of a natural piety.

On Bores and Manners to Bores

Is it easy to be charitable to bores. Those whom we find it difficult to forgive are not those who bore us but those whom we bore.

For how many of us remember that most important rule of conversation, that we should always conduct it with a view to pleasing not ourselves but the other party? A man often repents of the fact that he has spoken, but very seldom over the fact that he has held his tongue.

Most, if not all, of the world's wisdom has been conveyed in words. How else, indeed, could it be conveyed? People sometimes talk as if words were unimportant, not worth quarrelling over, they say. But why do we choose one word rather than another if there is no difference between them? If I called the young woman you are engaged to a chimpanzee instead of an angel, wouldn't there be a quarrel about words? If I am not to use words, how am I to convey my meaning to you? By wagging my ears? But the expressiveness of movement of even the most mobile ear-waggle is limited. Many great men have been great precisely because of their copious and felicitous use of words. Shakespeare, for example, or Dr. Johnson, and it was Stevenson who said, "The first duty of a man is to speak. That is his chief business in the world."

Nevertheless, there are many of us, especially women, who scandalously abuse the gift of speech. Unable to bear themselves in silence, they go dribbling on like a leaky shower-bath, irrespective of whether anybody is listening to them or not, or, worst still, they interrupt themselves – just to make sure you *are* listening – in the middle of their tedious recitals of the trivial doings of their insignificant relatives. For example: "Janet told me that when she was staying with Auntie Sue, or was it Auntie Mary? . . ." You pay no attention. "My dear, *was* it with Auntie Sue or with Auntie Mary that Janet was staying? No, I remember now, it was not Janet at all but Annie. Why do you let me say such things . . .? You

knew it was Annie all the time that stayed with Aunt Mary." And so on and so on. We all know women like that, who go on and on for all the world as if somebody had left a tap running.

Men also seem increasingly unable to stop talking as they get older. They *will* tell you stories: "Have you heard this one?" they say, regardless of the fact that until they have told it to you you cannot tell whether you have heard it or not. So out of mere politeness you have to listen to them while they inflict stories which have no justification whatever except that the teller has reached his "anecdoteage."

My Voice

Thanks to the gramophone and to the wireless, one is able to-day to hear the sound of one's own voice. I have heard mine on many occasions, and I dislike it. In fact, the first time I heard it over the wireless I was appalled. I had always believed I was a plain, forcible, straightforward person, expressing myself in what I believed to be a bluff, hearty, downright voice with no nonsense about it. When I heard those finicky and affected accents uttered in that infirm and trembling tone, I was shocked to my marrow! In fact, so shocked that I immediately set to work to take lessons in voice production.

Oh, those slurred consonants; oh, those impure vowel sounds; oh, those imperfectly rolled R's; oh, that affected little lisp. How I hated it. And so I set to work seriously with a teacher who told me how and where to produce my voice, so that I could get the maximum effect with the minimum of fatigue.

I think it is a sorry commentary upon those of us whose business it is to communicate ideas, to preach, to lecture, to write, in fact to address the public, by voice and pen, that most of us are incapable of speaking firmly and clearly, or of writing legibly or understand-

ably. In other words, we have never mastered the instruments of our trade. Not to do that is to pay a poor compliment to one's public and to do an injustice to oneself!

Charm and "Showmanship"

Manners, voice, appearance, they all help to make up what we vaguely call "charm"; and the more charming a man is, the more he is able to "put things over." Such an ability is, of course, commendable, and I'm all in favour of it; it is what we mean by "showmanship."

Look at a man like Shaw, who can explain anything to anybody, or look at me, who can explain most things to some people and some things to most people. How can one condemn a quality by virtue of which one lives, moves, and has one's being? Why, then, is showmanship suspected? Let me try to answer with regard to a similar and similarly distrusted quality, charm. At dinner one night I sat next to a member of his Majesty's Government, in fact, to a Minister. He was one of the most charming men I have ever met. I hadn't been with him for five minutes before he had made me feel not that *he* was great and eminent and successful, but that I was – and that, surely, is one of the most potent elements in charm, as it is one of the greatest factors in success, that you should be able at will, to make those with whom you are talking, or doing business, think not that you are important, but that they are, for then they look back upon you and the interview with pleasure, speak kindly of you when they hear your name mentioned, and, on any excuse, elect or appoint you to something. Always to conduct a conversation with a view to pleasing not oneself but the other party – that is one of the secrets of charm and, therefore, of success.

Nevertheless, I came away suspecting not my neighbour at the dinner party – for indeed I have nothing against him – but the

characteristic in him which had so bewitched me. Now why did I? "Because," I said to myself, "a man with a charm like that could get away with anything," and then, I added, "human nature being what it is, a man who can get away with anything will have a very strong temptation to do so. You suspect, in other words, a charming man because you feel that he could so very easily deceive or bamboozle you that it must be hard for him not occasionally to do so."

Now let us transfer that reasoning to showmanship. You suspect a good showman because, knowing he can put across anything, you know in your hearts that he will have the temptation to put across things which are not worth putting across, or, at any rate, that the things which he puts across are not half so good as he pretends them to be, and as, under the spell of his showmanship, you take them at the time to be.

Take advertising, for example. I suspect all advertised goods (this is, of course, a peculiar and, as I am often reminded, a most unreasonable characteristic of mine), and the more persuasively they are advertised, the more I suspect them. Why? Because I was brought up to believe that good wine needs no bush, which means that if the goods are good, there is no need to spend money on telling me that they are. Now, the more effort that is made in persuading me that I ought to buy them, the less I feel they are worth the effort that is made, because if they are *really* worth buying, then their merit can be trusted to sell them. On the same principle, I suspect heavily "made-up" women. Women are like land, and good land needs no top dressing. Hence a woman who has to act as a show-woman to her body, advertising it with paint and powder, and lipstick and rouge, is probably, I tell myself, trying to make me think that her body is more beautiful than it is. The more beautiful a woman, the less show-womanship she needs.

Versatility

We suspect charm; we suspect showmanship; and we suspect versatility. The public is always prejudiced against the man who appears before it in more than one capacity. It is a bad policy to get too many reputations. The reason, I suppose, is that most men cannot excel in any sphere, and it is bad enough, therefore, for them to have to tolerate the superior talent, or cleverness, or prowess, or courage of somebody who does. But difficult enough to bear in one sphere, it becomes quite intolerable that somebody should excel in more than one.

Take Shaw, for example, the greatest dramatist since Shakespeare, the greatest Socialist propagandist the country has known, the best writer of English prose in our time, and a first-rate philosopher. Now, because people could not bear that he should be all this, those who recognised him as a playwright refused to take him seriously as a philosopher or Socialist. Charlie Chaplin has all his life wanted to play tragic parts, and has only been prevented by the repeated warnings of his managers, friends, and advisers that, however good he was, nobody could ever take seriously the man with a bowler hat, big boots, and swagger cane.

I can remember, in my own case, how reluctant I was to admit that Wilfred Rhodes, the best or second best bowler that Yorkshire had ever had, was good enough to go in first for England as a batsman. How I hated enlarging my conception of Rhodes the spin bowler to embrace Rhodes the first wicket partner of Hobbs.

On Living with Superior People

Living with a genius is always said to be difficult, and undoubtedly it is. But a person can be enormously superior to oneself without being a genius.

Is it a good plan to live with such a person? For some perhaps it may be, but as for me, although I'd like it, I am sure it would be bad for me, not only because it would spoil me, but because such superior virtue would make me feel by contrast mean, ugly and little. And then, hating to be shown up by contrast, hating to see myself in the mirror of perfection, I should proceed to hate the perfect person for throwing up into high relief my own littleness and showing me to myself as I am.

The trouble with unselfish people is that one can never forgive them for setting a standard by which one knows that one ought to live, but by which one equally knows that one cannot live. We most of us resent the superiority of superior people, even when we know it is genuine, and want to take it out of them whenever we get the chance for making us feel small. For all these reasons I am sure it would be bad for me to live in the illumination of such virtues.

On Saying What You Think

Some people, of course, have always taken great pride in saying what they think. Such an attitude may be a virtue, or a form of self-indulgence. It depends so much upon what you think. If you say what you think about a person, then nine times out of ten "saying what you think" is a form of self-indulgence. You speak your mind as an excuse for giving other people a piece of your mind. People who say what they think about other people are usually disagreeable persons who use bluntness as an excuse for rudeness. It is rarely that those who say what they think are found to think anything agreeable.

There are whole classes, even races, of persons who pride themselves on being outspokenly blunt, as, for example, Americans and Yorkshiremen. The bluntness of Americans is a myth. In fact,

Americans wrap up their sentiments in such a wealth of exaggerated politeness that, as often as not, it is impossible to tell what they really mean. How fulsome, for example, are letters from American publishers and business men! I have never met an American woman who did not turn all the geese of her acquaintance into swans. "She's such a dear," "She's the sweetest woman I have ever met," "She's so cute I'd love to have you meet her" – and so on, about the very ordinary American woman whom the speaker happens to know, until you long for a breath of astringent criticism to take you out of this treacle pond of compliments and gush in which so many Americans insist on swimming. Yorkshiremen talk bluntly, but, in my experience, dislike you to talk with equal bluntness. They love to speak their mind about the soft and hypocritical southerner; but how they hate it when the southerner replies in kind!

But what is self-indulgence in regard to people is usually virtuous in regard to institutions, injustices, and policies. To have said what you thought about the slave trade 150 years ago was a virtue, and a dangerous one. To say what you think about vested interests now is a virtue, and a dangerous one. Hence it is a good rule always to say the worst of what you think about institutions, interests, policies, but to hold your tongue in relation to those things you could wish otherwise in people.

Gossip

All of us, of course, delight in gossip. It seems to me that the arguments for and against gossiping are about equal.

On the one hand is the great pleasure it brings to the gossip, especially if the gossip is, as most gossip is, malicious. There is very little pleasure in saying *pleasant* things about people behind their backs, much in saying unpleasant ones. Most of us, after all, live flat, boring, uninteresting and respectable lives, and unconsciously

resent the flatness and uneventfulness which the maintenance of our respectability imposes upon us. We do our best to compensate for this by tearing to bits the characters of those whose lives are obviously more exciting and romantic, especially on the sexual plane, and we cry "sour grapes" at those who indulge, as we believe, in pleasures denied to ourselves by age or lack of charm, and glory in the thought of *their* wickedness, for which we proceed to take it out of them. There is also the pleasure which we must not under-rate, of sheer disinterested malice.

On the other hand, there is the misery which gossip often brings to the person gossiped about – the "gossipee." Many people, especially women, have been made so miserable by the slanderous tongues of their neighbours that they have taken their own lives. I have often read in a coroner's verdict on a suicide, a censure upon the clacking tongues of the women who drove the unfortunate girl to escape by death. You can read a good example of this kind of thing in Nathaniel Hawthorne's book, "The Scarlet Letter."

At the moment I think the balance of arguments is in favour of the gossipers, if only to redress the balance which has been unfairly tipped against them by two factors – firstly, mobility of transport, particularly the invention of motor-cars, which enables people to get about so much, that it is difficult for their neighbours to keep them under their eye and to know precisely what they are doing, and secondly, the practice of birth control, which has the effect of preventing those visible evidences of misdoing – illegitimate children – upon whom the gossipers' tongues fasten.

People, I am told, appoint "Anti-Gossip Committees." No harm in this, but also no good, since nothing will stop people gossiping, malicious interest in our neighbours being a fundamental human trait. The parson responsible for the recent formation of one such Committee should remember that he was anticipated two thousand years ago by one James, whose epistle, printed in the New Testament, should, if people took their Bible seriously, have put an end to

gossip once and for all. Listen, for example, to this : "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body." Similarly, he points out, the rudder guides the big ship. "Even so," he goes on, "the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity : so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." And he concludes : "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

Vigilantes

But while there is not much harm in Anti-Gossip Committees, I see a danger in all these unofficial committees which have sprung up mushroom-like during the war. I think that the formation of unofficial policing or vigilancing committees to expose illegal and unpatriotic acts by anonymous letters, or to watch neighbours for tax-dodging is one of the most dangerous developments of the war. The job of preventing evasions of the law and ensuring that the various war-time regulations are complied with is a job for the authorities – there are enough of them in all conscience – not a job for unofficial persons who owe their authority to nothing but their zeal.

What is the distinction? That the official authorities are elected by the people, hold their power in trust for the people, and are ultimately responsible to the people. Therefore, if they misuse their power, if they persecute people or establish an inquisition into their private lives, they can, in the long run, be brought to book and replaced by others who have enough wisdom not to yield to

this, the besetting temptation of all official persons, the temptation to get too big for one's boots.

The truth is that human beings are not sufficiently angelic to be entrusted, still less to entrust themselves, with unchecked powers over the lives of their neighbours; nor does the history of such unofficial organisations – for example, the Ku-Klux-Klan in America after the Civil War (incidentally it was revived after the Great War) or the vigilance committees established in the United States to nose out and denounce anybody with Left Wing tendencies during the famous Red scare of the early 'twenties – inspire any confidence in the wisdom shown by such bodies in the use of their self-endowed powers. Further, the existence of such bodies encourages spying and laying of information. Everybody takes advantage of the opportunity to denounce anybody against whom he or she has a grudge. Thus the existence of such committees gives an opportunity to malice, puts a premium upon spite, and encourages nosiness and tale-bearing. So far we have managed very creditably not to be a nation of informers. Don't let us be encouraged by these committees to turn into one.

Mankind has been guilty of worse crimes than the anonymous letter, but I doubt whether it has ever perpetrated a meaner one.

On Women

What makes me cynical and bitter about women?

This question is unanswerable, belonging, as it does, to the category of which "Have you stopped beating your wife yet?" is the best known example. For to answer it either way presupposes that the implication which it carries is true; namely, that I *am* cynical and bitter about women.

Now, why on earth should anybody suppose that? Is it because I said once over the radio that women are not so sensitive to pain as men, that they are better adapted to the business of living, live longer, don't die in such quantities at birth, and are obviously tougher in every way?

I received dozens of letters from women protesting that this entails a low or cynical view of their sex. For once, they completely baffle me. Why should they, or anybody else, wish it to be thought that they feel pain acutely and intensely? Surely they ought to be grateful to the Almighty for making them comparatively insensitive, instead of being angry with me for pointing out the fact.

Or is it, perhaps, because I said that no courageousness was involved in having a child. But to point out what is true is not to be cynical, and surely the fact of the matter is that women have children, just as both men and women go through operations; have them, in fact, whether they like it or whether they don't, whether they are brave or whether they are timid, because they can do no other; because, in fact, they cannot help themselves.

Or, I am told, that I never say anything nice about the female sex. What nonsense! I say much nicer things to women than ever I have said to men, but naturally not in public. Surely even a woman can understand that one's deeper feelings are too sacred for publication!

Do Women Manage Men?

I am asked whether it takes a really clever woman to manage a really clever man. It all depends, of course, on what you mean by "manage." There are certain moods in which women can do what they like with men. They are moods of male weakness and discouragement.

There come times in the life of every man when he wants petting, comforting, assuring, and strengthening. It has been one of those days in which everything has gone wrong; you have been reprimanded by your chief at the office; you have made a bad showing at an interview; the "winner" which you have backed has failed to stay the course; you have missed your train, broken your bootlace, lost your spectacles, caught a cold, got the toothache — and not one of these things alone has happened to you, but all of them together. You go home, it may be, late at night, tired, despondent, discouraged. That is the time when a man passionately wants the reassurance of a woman.

"Yes," she must say to him, "I know it has been a dreadful day and everything has gone wrong. Let me get you a bit of supper and then have a nice hot bath, and I will come and shampoo your hair; then I will see you into bed, tuck you in and give you three aspirins and some hot milk, and if in the night you can't sleep I will make you a cup of tea. It will be a new day to-morrow and you'll see it all differently. Now come along, dear . . . !" And so on, and so on.

Now it may not be often that a man wants this sort of thing said to him, but when he does, he wants it more intensely than anything in the world, and the woman who can say it can, for so long as the mood lasts, completely manage the broken male to whom she says it.

The implication of all this is that when a man is strong and sure of himself he does not want to be managed by women, and, if he is worth his salt, won't be. Indeed, most clever men who have made history have been married to shrews or scolds who made domestic life so uncomfortable to them that they had to take to thinking, composing, writing, governing, or conquering in order to get away from home life. Domestic happiness is no doubt very fine, but it is very enfeebling, and the happily married man undergoes a sort of fatty degeneration of his moral and intellectual being.

All the arguments to the contrary have been put about by women who desire to inflate their importance in men's lives.

And Inspire Them?

In just the same way, women have always been careful to foster the belief that at the bottom of all high endeavour by a man lies the inspiration of a woman; that in times of crisis a man is strengthened by the presence and administrations of his wife. *Cherchez la femme*, in fact.

I'd like to put it on record that, so far as I can see, very little of what has been worth doing or daring in the world has ever been done or dared for the sake of a woman.

Have the great books been written for women? No. Have women been the inspiration of the great religious teachers? No. Has great music been composed because of women? No. Great generals have won their battles, great statesmen have governed their countries, not for the sake of women, but in pursuance of

ambition or simply from the drive which is in all of us who are worth our salt to do the job, which we alone can do, as well as we can do it. *Ne cherchez pas la femme*, in fact.

Even the makers of great fortunes owe little to women, though here, I think, women do begin to be important, because the effect of their influence is to drive men to make money. How often have I seen in my life a young man full of ideals, ready to risk unpopularity for forlorn causes, or despised beliefs, ready to face poverty in order to do the work which he wants to do, rather than to take money for doing work which the world offers him to do, falling in love, marrying, and subsiding into a common or garden breadwinner for wife and family. In other words, the influence of women has been to bank down the generous fires of youthful idealism and to make the man play for safety.

If I am right about this general influence of women, men rely for coolness and daring in moments of crisis not upon the inspiration of a woman, but upon their own courage and self-respect.

“*The Cold in the Head*”

Another myth is the feminine demeanour under the affliction of a “cold in the head.” When men have a cold in the head, they are so very sorry for themselves, whereas the average woman, we are told, treats it very lightly and makes no fuss about it. Hence what? Hence, I suppose, the superior endurance, hardihood, equanimity of women.

I can’t take this sort of thing very seriously. Discussing it, therefore, in the spirit in which I suppose I’m meant to take it, I should say that men, being superior organisms, are more highly developed. The more highly developed a mechanism, the more likely to go wrong as compared with a more elementary mechanism, a radio set, for example, as compared with a pair of pincers. The same is

true of organisms. The more highly developed, the more vulnerable; also the more sensitive.

Hence men feel pain more keenly than women. That is why they are so much more afraid of the dentist; why almost any woman can hold plates which are so hot that I should let them fall crashing to the floor; why you can see on any of our summer beaches in peace-time young men, blue with cold, trying to keep in the water as long as young women, who haven't turned a hair. Young men, you see, have not yet realised that young women, having a less highly developed nervous system and nerve endings farther from the surface than their own, just don't feel the cold as they do. Finally, and conclusively, no man could stand having a child.

Hence men make more fuss about colds than women, first, because they feel them more, and, secondly, because they know that if they do, women will fuss over them. But they don't fuss about other women when *they* have colds; nor do men fuss over them.

Women M.P.s

I was, I confess, puzzled to read some time ago that a Conference of Labour Women had declared against the adoption of women as parliamentary candidates. Why, one wonders, do women so persistently reject and suspect their own sex in political and social affairs? They don't always reject them. Many women prefer a woman doctor for all purposes, and a vast number of women prefer a woman doctor for particular purposes.

But by and large, women have no trade union spirit. Their existence is still passed in the era of unlimited competition, the era which for men came to an end at the beginning of the 19th century when they learned to combine for common purposes in defence of their common interests.

One of the reasons for this competitive spirit, I suppose, is that for nine women out of ten, until the war came, the only method of maintaining themselves was by living on the earnings of some man who maintained a woman as his wife in return for services of beds, board and the mothering of his children. As there were 2,000,000 extra women in this country in the years between the wars there was inevitably a considerable amount of competition for such men as were available, and women regarding one another as rivals looked out upon one another with an instinctive defensive suspicion.

If that is women's habitual attitude to other women, they have not yet emancipated themselves from its domination when it comes to electing a woman to represent them in Parliament—in 1944 there were only 13, I believe, out of 615—although there are still 1,000,000 more women than men voters—or choosing a woman to attend to them when they are sick, or to plead their case in court when they are accused.

I think there is another reason. Women, by and large, do not acquit themselves well in positions of power or authority. Power does not sit easily upon them. In the heart of every woman there lurks a schoolmistress. Put the woman in power and the schoolmistress pops out, so fussily conscientious, so observant of the letter of the law, and so neglectful of its spirit, making mountains out of molehills and running her head blindly against the mountains. Also, like most schoolmistresses, and many schoolmasters, women in power are given to favouritism. They let their emotions sway their sense of justice even more grotesquely than do men. And women, knowing this, persistently refuse to elect other women to represent them or to govern them whenever they can get a chance of electing a man.

Women in Public Affairs

And yet women do on occasions manifest a certain feminine *esprit de corps*. My mind goes back to the days when women were struggling for the vote, and when I spent a night in prison for breaking windows in Oxford Street on behalf of the cause.

What was their demand? The right to take part, as citizens, in all the public affairs of the community without any barrier of sex. They demanded, in other words, a fair field and no sexual favour, which means that fitness for the required function, irrespective of sex, should be the only test to apply when you are considering whether a person should vote, or govern, or teach, or serve on a committee, or conduct an investigation.

An important principle follows: it is that women make a mistake in staking out a claim to pronounce upon and investigate matters pertaining only to women. If they are to function as citizens, and not as women, then let them function in all matters pertaining to citizens, whether men or women. In other words, if you are not to ask the question, "What sex is he or she?" when you are considering who is to conduct an inquiry, or to take up an appointment, then you should not ask the question, "What sex is he or she?" when you are considering some official or administrator or teacher whose conduct of affairs is being inquired into.

It follows that if women are competent to inquire into women's affairs, they are also competent to inquire into men's affairs. Those who insist that there are special subjects for women, that there should be special papers for women, special education for women, special fields of inquiry for women, are still labouring under the prejudice, which the suffragettes challenged, that a woman is a special kind of creature, one of the more attractive though troublesome forms of livestock; a mixture between a doll and a lap-dog, demanding special kind of treatment because she is a special kind of creature. Once you take this view you are perpetually being

overcome by surprise when she manages to do some of the things that men do, although she does not, in point of fact, do them very well.

In fact, you tend to drop into the Dr. Johnson attitude to a woman preaching, which was (I am quoting from memory), "Sir, — It was like a dog standing on its hind legs. It was not well done, but it was remarkable that it should be done at all."

Although, then, I think women had a right to object to exclusion from the committee of investigation which was appointed to inquire into the affairs of the A.T.S., I think they objected on the wrong grounds. They were wrong, because they based their objection on the fact that it was the A.T.S. whose conditions were to be investigated. A woman's claim to investigate the conditions of the A.T.S. is, in my view, equally valid for investigation of the conditions of the Navy, Army, and R.A.F.

Women and Power

Women, I remarked above, do not acquit themselves well in positions of power or authority. I would like to elaborate this. I don't think I have ever met women working under the control of other women who would not have preferred to be under the control of a man. They have been unbelievably frank about it.

How well one knows them, those women executives, staff officers, matrons, principals, supervisors, sergeants, and the rest. How they love to throw their weight about, glorying in the brief authority of their little day. How big they get for their moral boots. They are capricious, given to favouritism, and usually intolerable to pretty girls of whom, I suppose, they are unconsciously jealous.

Power, I think, is bad for anybody, but specially bad for women, especially if they are single women, who make up in the exercise of power for the frustrations engendered by the lack of love.

There may be circumstances when a man should be under the direction of a woman, but I have never met them. Whenever I have been in that unfortunate position I have been bullied and nagged at and oppressed, or I have been alternately petted and rebuked, been made the subject of gross favouritism or the victim of gross injustice, or rubbed up so completely the wrong way that the bristles upon my mental and spiritual skin have stood out like quills on a porcupine.

Whenever I have been subject to women in authority, I have been made to suffer for it. My fault or theirs? I have my own answer to that question, but I do not propose to say what it is. All sensible men hold the same opinion about women, says Samuel Butler somewhere, but no sensible man has ever yet said what it is. Let other men, similarly miserably circumstanced, give their own answer for themselves.

But I don't feel half so sorry for men subjected to the authority of women as I do for women subjected to the authority of women.

Conscientiousness

A headmaster once told me that if you give a girl too much homework, she will try to do it and have a breakdown, but that if you give too much to a boy, he will do as much as he can, leave the rest and not worry. This tallied with what on other grounds I have come to believe – that women are much more conscientious than men.

It sounds as if in saying this I am paying women a compliment, but I don't mean to. Most of my experience of women at work relates to girls at school, and young women at the University. Anxious to please, determined to do the right thing, with what conscientious patience they get up their lessons and their notes, and reproduce them. And how accurately they do reproduce them.

Somebody once defined a lecture as "the transfer of a certain amount of material from the notebook of the lecturer to the notebooks of the students, without passing through the minds of either." Often when lecturing to women I have thought that the jibe was justified.

Now if you transfer this tendency to another sphere, you will find in women a pedantic adhesion to rules, a preoccupation with the letter of the law rather than with its spirit; a concentration upon form rather than substance. And, speaking of forms, how women love filling up forms. Let me give you an example.

There is a single-line railway track in the South of England, which I know well. I know, too, that only two trains pass along it in each direction every day, and I also know the times of their passing. I am fond of railway tracks, and this one runs for most of its way through deep cuttings, the banks of which, in the spring, are ablaze with flowers. Along the side of the track there runs a main road, which in peace-time is a maelstrom of private motors, and which was much used by army traffic. Walking along the road some time during the war I encountered the inevitable army convoy – lorries, motor bicycles, tanks, and Lord knows what, taking up all the road, and hurtling past at speeds which continually sent me scuttling into the hedge for safety.

So I took to the railway line. After a mile of its peace and quietness, I came to a signal-box, from which there emerged an excited woman to tell me that I must not walk along the railway line – it was forbidden. Why was it forbidden? I asked. Because, came the reply, it was dangerous. I was to walk along the road. "But look at the road," said I. "It is crawling with petrol-driven vehicles in every stage of dangerousness, and you know as well as I do that there won't be a train along this line for the next three hours." This consideration, which would have appealed to a man, left the woman wholly unmoved. The letter of the law which forbade walking along the railway lines was more important to her

than the spirit of the law which was directed to ensure the safety of pedestrians.

How conscientiously she was observing the rules! How pleased I was to take no notice of her.

Honesty

It seems to have been the general view all the way up and down the ages that women are fundamentally less honest than men.

I take samples at random: Here is Mahomet: "Be careful in your handling of woman; for she was made out of a crooked bone and even the best in her bears traces thereof. If you try to bend her straight she will break, if you leave her alone, she will remain crooked."

Here is a Persian writer, Nizami of the 12th century: "Woman was born from the left side of a man, and nothing that comes from the left can be right."

Here, finally, are 20th century English miners, 50 per cent. of whom were shown in an investigation, by a Gallup Poll, to have refused to allow their wives the right to own their own house-keeping savings. Why? "Because," as one of them said, "if you let women keep their housekeeping savings they will starve their husbands to get them."

As to the reasons for this general view. There is the well-known reason that since woman yielded to the temptation of a serpent, part of the serpent's nature entered into woman. Now, serpents are deceitful. There is Aristotle's reason that women are not wholly human, being, as he thought, slight deviations from the normal or standard nature of humanity. "For females," he says, "are weaker and colder in nature, and we must consider femaleness as a kind of physical defect." There is the reason given by Schopenhauer that women are only large children, which, he said, is why

they are "directly adapted to act as the nurses and educators of our early childhood, being themselves childish, foolish, and short-sighted – in a word, big children all their lives." Now children, it is well known, have no morals.

I don't suppose there could have been so much smoke about women blowing so persistently down the ages without a little fire. Nevertheless, I must confess that I myself have come across little or no evidence to support the view that women are more dishonest than men; in fact, I have less evidence of women's dishonesty, since, as women always insist on one's paying for them, no opportunity for dishonesty could in their case arise, as it might have done if one were to lend them money instead of giving it.

But I do think that women are foolish, and if you who read this think that all I have said is pretty foolish, being, after all, mere men's foolishness, remember what Mrs. Poyser says in "Adam Bede": "I'm not denyin' that women are foolish; God Almighty made 'em to match the men."

Cruelty

When it comes to a question of cruelty, however, I don't think there is much to choose between the sexes. Men, no doubt, have inflicted more physical agony upon their fellow beings than women; men, that is to say, have done the fighting and torturing, but it is easy to point out that women have not had such good or so many opportunities. When they have been given the opportunity they have shown that they fall very little short in these matters of the men.

I remember a story about a mob of Athenian women stabbing some unfortunate person – I forget who – with the pins of their brooches. I have read stories of gently nurtured American women fighting for seats in excursion trains to take them to a lynching,

where they might have the privilege of seeing a negro's tongue pulled out before he is burned on a slow fire. I have not learned that women showed any signs of repulsion at seeing Christians thrown to lions, or gladiators gashing one another to bits in the amphitheatre in Rome.

Where, I think, such difference as there maybe does come in, is in the greater rationality of my sex. It is the mark of a rational person not to be unduly influenced by events happening in his own immediate spatial temporary neighbourhood.

Now we all know the woman who will dissolve into an ecstasy of woeful tenderness over the dog who is run over in the street, while reading quite unmoved the news that two million people have died of hunger in China owing to the floodings of the Yellow River, or hearing without a tremor that 150 people are dying daily of famine in Calcutta. Men are nearly as irrational, but, as far as I can see, not quite. They are a *little* more prepared to agree that human suffering is a matter of importance even if it does not take place under their eyes and noses.

From this point of view a scale of rationality might be composed, beginning at the bottom with the earwig who is presumably interested only in what is happening to and immediately around his body, proceeding upwards through the dog who is interested in what is happening in the house and the street, the savage interested in what is happening in and to his tribe and his crops, the woman interested in the village and the neighbours, the reasonable educated man interested in his country and the world, and the saint and the sage who thinks every sentient being relevant to his concern—witness St. Paul, for example, saying of the Kingdom of Heaven that therein “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,” in other words, that we are all equal in the eyes of God, or Christ pointing out that God is no less interested in the sparrows than He is in us.

I think that it is the lack of imaginative vision rather than

positive cruelty which makes women put up with the otherwise intolerable cruelties – they would think them intolerable if they knew about them – of the fur and feather trades. The facts are appalling. Baby seals ripped from their mother's bodies because the value of the fur of the unborn seal is greater; animals, mink, silver fox, and so on, caught in steel traps and lingering for weeks until the trapper comes to put them out of agony, or tearing off a limb in their convulsive efforts to get free.

The details of the trade in birds' feathers are equally horrible. I don't believe that if they realised these facts imaginatively, kindly women – women who are personally much kinder and more considerate than I who am horrified by them – would consent to deck their bodies in portions of dead animals which are obtained at the cost of such appalling suffering.

Fanaticism

Fanaticism and cruelty often go hand in hand. Hitler once said that his most fanatical followers were women, which seems to show that women are more fanatical than men. But are they?

But first, what does one mean by "fanatical"? Let us provisionally define a fanatic as a person immoderately addicted to beliefs which there is no particular reason to think true, and determined to make the world uncomfortable for everybody who does not share them, uncomfortable to the point of killing, torturing, or roasting. Fanatics are those who have believed that other people's opinions can be improved by the infliction of physical discomfort or even gross physical pain upon their bodies.

Now, from this point of view, women seem to me no more and no less fanatical than men. Admittedly most of the fanatics of history are males. Males ran the Inquisition; males, during the two years, 1482-1484, burned 2,000 men and women in one city,

the city of Seville in Spain, alone, in the belief that they were saving their souls from damnation; males were responsible for the persecution of witches, involving the torturing and roasting of so many women in Germany in the early 16th century that in some villages not a single woman was left alive over the age of 40. Ironsides were males, Levellers and Seventh Day Adventists were males; males began the Nazi and the Fascist movements; males invented Communism. In fact, most of the fanatics who figure in history both past and present belong to my sex. But I don't, therefore, think that women are less fanatical; I surmise merely that their fanaticism is less recorded.

Women figure so little in history in any connection, partly perhaps because they have made the mistake of allowing all the history books to be written by men, partly because they have been dominated by Pericles' advice to Athenian women that the highest excellence of women consisted in their being least talked of, either for good or ill, among the men.

But so far as the fanatics I have met are concerned, they have been as often as not women as men, perhaps more often women than men. Take my fan mail, for example! When somebody writes to me and says: 'I think, Mr. Joad, you are the wisest man alive and ought to become Prime Minister,' or alternatively "that you are one of the wickedest men alive and that you ought to be silenced," the betting is, nine times out of ten, that it is a woman. I call the frame of mind which expresses itself in these utterances fanatical because there seems to be no reason to think either of them to be true.

And there is one particular sphere in which the exercise of fanaticism is almost wholly female. That is the sphere of sexual morals. It is women, particularly elderly women, who fanatically maintain the importance of chastity in young women, and do their best to make the world intolerable for those young women who avail themselves of opportunities denied to their elders by lack of charm. Thus

elderly women give young women good advice when they can no longer give them bad examples. Thus, too, women invented in the Victorian age that fanatical figure, Mrs. Grundy.

Should Women Fight in Wars?

Women, if I am right, are neither more nor less cruel than men, neither more nor less fanatical. But can these facts be used in any argument against their taking an active part in warfare?

I think not. Is a point of morals involved? No. If it is wrong to kill a fellow human creature, it is just as wrong to make the shell that kills him, with intent that it shall be used for that purpose. If the shell-making is right, so is the shell-using.

Is there a point of logic? No. The pressure of a finger on the trigger sets going a complicated mechanism as a result of which a piece of metal is launched into a man's body. Now the filling of the piece of metal with explosive or the coating of the bullet with nickel are simply earlier stages in the same complex process.

To kill is the intention of the participators in both parts of the process – and death results when the piece of metal has penetrated a vital part. The trigger-puller launches it; the nickel-coater prepares it. Why, then, not launch it? Is there some special gentleness about women which forbids the finger on the trigger? Not a bit of it. I have yet to discover, in spite of the angel of mercy myth, that women are either more or less barbarous than men.

I have just read in the papers that a band of women students swooped upon a gramophone record of a speech made by myself and forcibly reft it away from the organiser of a meeting. The intention was, presumably, to use force in order that a voice should not be allowed to use arguments which the women did not wish to be heard. There is a familiar ring about this. Where does it hail from? Why, of course, from Nazi Germany. Now the Nazi

way is the barbarous way. I shouldn't be surprised to hear that the women proceeded from record stealing to book burning.

I suppose that the basis of the exclusion of women from dangerous activities, such as fighting, is physiological. A woman's life is more valuable to the community than a man's, seeing that while 20 men and one woman can bear no more children for the community than one man and one woman, 20 women and one man can, presumably, produce nearly as many children as 20 women and 20 men. Hence, in early communities, women were segregated; their lives being more potentially valuable to the State. The tradition has persisted ever since.

But now that in modern warfare women are in the firing line, whether they like it or not; now that women are the targets of the bombs no less than men; now that modern war penetrates into every woman's life as much as into every man's; now, in short, that there are no exemptions from warfare, this particular consideration, if indeed it lies, as I suppose it does, at the basis of the tradition which permits women to coat bullets but not to fire them, no longer holds good.

Women and Dress

Many people still believe that in the animal kingdom it is the male who preens and struts to attract the female, whereas among human beings it is only the female who dresses up and dabs herself with paint.

This belief is an illusion. In almost all societies, both savage and civilised, man has dressed himself up in every conceivable variety of feather, ruffle, silk, satin, skin, and colour.

Look at the pictures of savage tribes dancing. Who are coloured with paint? Whose heads sprout with feathers? Whose limbs are burdened with polished metal? Those of the men!

Consider the English aristocracy say, in the 18th century. What elaboration of adornment of the man, and, if I may say so, what successful elaboration of adornment!

When I played Bob Acres in Sheridan's "The Rivals," I could not believe my mirror, so gloriously was I transformed with my pink tights and my satin brocaded coat, the wig on my head and the patch on my cheek. Even in Dickens's time one reads – I was reading it only this morning – of Mr. Datchery with his yellow waistcoat, his blue surtout and, I think – I am not sure of this – his *purple* smalls. It is only when the 19th century gets under way that the hold of drabness begins to overtake men's dress. Why does it? I am not sure. It is part, perhaps, of the general drabness of a century in which men thought that the making of money was the only manly activity and that all the arts and graces of life should be sacrificed to the accumulation of brass.

Hence the *spending* of the money was left to women, which meant that the arts and graces, such as they were, became the woman's preserve. The result was a maximum of sexual differentiation, the men getting drabber and drabber, the women decked out in ever more unserviceable garments in order to display to the world that the husbands who maintained them had enough substance to maintain them in idleness. Crinolines in women, like long finger-nails in women, are gestures to the world that the woman in question is not required to do any useful work. Why not? Because the man on whom she lives is rich enough to maintain her idleness. "Vicarious ostentation" is the phrase that an American economist called Veblen coined to describe this showing off of one's wealth not in one's own person but in that of one's woman.

When you come to the 20th century a new factor appears, and grows more marked in the 20 years between the two wars: this is the great and growing surplus of women. In this country alone, as I said above, there were 2,000,000 more women than men during the twenties and early thirties. The women, then, had to compete

for the men, of whom there were not enough to go round, with the result that the women preened and painted, and blooded their finger-nails, whereas men had less compulsion to enter into competition with one another in the sexual market for such an abundance of female bidders.

It was interesting, by the way, during the war, to see the tables turned. Our big towns were flooded with Dominion and American troops, and the women, at last, for the first time in many years, were in the minority. High time, too!

Housework

I don't hold at all with domestic servants, for reasons you will find in the article "The Post-war World" in my book *Opinions*, where I suggested that the right basis for organising domestic work after the war was a corps of domestic workers run by the local authority and leased out for so many hours a day to help overburdened housewives, just as we lease out nurses or midwives.

The great thing is to abolish that system which obtained in the 19th century whereby an apparently inexhaustible supply of working-class girls were driven, by economic necessity, to subject themselves to heavy work and intolerably long hours in basement or semi-basement kitchens full of black-beetles for tyrannical or censorious mistresses, who thought that they had bought the care of their souls and their morals when they had paid for the services of their hands and their feet.

But whether mistresses should or should not do their own housework is another question. Again, I think not. The question is often raised: Should women go back to the home? But what is overlooked is that in the middle-classes, in regard to whom the question chiefly arises, there is to all intents and purposes no home to go back to.

The progress of modern science has robbed the housework of almost everything that invested it with interest or that demanded skill. The modern housewife gets her heat from the gas company, and her water from the local authority. She neither brews nor bakes, she has no skill in the making of preserves, she doesn't cook food so much as take out of tins and boxes food that has already been cooked. She doesn't prepare a meal, she buys from the stores meals already prepared. Practically nothing is left to challenge her capacities or to engage her interest, and the varied avocations of the skilled housewife have degenerated into a tiresome routine of cleaning and dusting and bed-making, which, with the aid of a vacuum cleaner, can be got through in a couple of hours, leaving the rest of the day for golf, tennis, the cinema, the *thé dansant*, and a little unconvincing love-making until the husband comes home in the evening.

The trouble about domestic work among the modern middle-classes is not that there is too much of it, but that there is not enough of it; at least, there is not enough that is interesting. Compare the life of the ordinary under-worked suburban or flat housewife with that of the over-worked farmer's wife – with the poultry to feed, the pet goat to attend to, and it may be the cows to drive in, as well as the care of the kitchen, the dairy, and the house. In terms of sheer happiness I would plump, every time, for the farmer's wife, overburdened as she is. Here, then, is another reason why we should get housework done, not by the woman who lives in the house but by the municipality, in precisely the same way as we now get it to collect our rubbish and look after our little children. If it can collect the dirt outside the house, it might just as well remove the dirt inside the house.

Who Should Pay?

And finally, I have been asked – should a gentleman pay for a lady?

Of course! I don't agree at all with the proposal to abolish a custom which lies at the very root of male supremacy. If we have no longer the power of the purse, the last vestige of our power over women will be gone.

We shall have to concede them equal pay for doing the same work; we shall have to surrender our power of choosing the restaurant, the theatre, or the cinema; we shall have to give up our patronage as superior beings, extending our favours to the women whom we have been gracious enough to choose as our companions for the evening. In fact, we shall have to give up our power of exclusive choice and share it on equal terms with the women, and in the secret hearts even of the proudest of us lurks the fear that if we did we might never be chosen. In fact, if we could no longer pay for women, we men should have to come off our perches altogether. No! The proposal runs counter to all our deepest instincts.

But I am speaking, of course, as a man. If I were a girl, and a plain one to boot whom nobody ever took out, I am sure I should answer differently.

Marriage and Family Life

The Ideal Marriage

Somebody recently remembered that there are very few ideally happily married men over forty. But I would go much further than that, and say that the number of ideally happy marriages is infinitesimal at all ages.

In fact, I don't know what an ideally happy marriage is and if I did, I should doubt whether such a thing existed. I've always found marriage difficult and distressing, and consequently my conception of the ideal marriage is the nice bright little home to *leave*. But let me try and imagine the ideal marriage. It is a state, presumably, in which both parties spend their lives in a private treacle pond of affection, stewing in love from the cradle to the grave. What could be more revolting? Mercifully, it does not often happen.

Being in love is, no doubt, very exciting, but does not make you happy. What it does is to victimise you by a series of illusions as the result of which the loving male endows the loved female with the beauty of a Venus, the wisdom of an Athene, the virtues of a Madonna, and the practical ability of a first-rate housewife, a collection of excellences which I imagine are scarcely, if ever, found concentrated in the same woman. (I see that, as usual, I am looking at the situation from the man's point of view only, and am reminded that an equivalent list of virtues is never to be found in the same man. Of course it isn't but when a woman falls in love with you

she insists on attributing them to you in spite of all the evidence to the contrary.)

Love is the bait on a hook of life whereby men and women are induced to take the steps which are necessary to perpetuate the species. Two people may be hopelessly and utterly incompatible; they may have no single taste in common, share no single preference or prejudice; they may belong to different countries, classes, or races; they may even be of different colours; they may hate one another in their hearts; yet once the bait, so cunningly compounded, of sexual attractiveness and sentimental romanticism is presented, the infected pair are no more free to refuse it than a starving dog is free to refuse a bone. Nature, in fact, takes them up by the scruff of the neck and pitch-forks them into one another's arms whether they like it or not, nature being concerned not with the happiness of individuals, but with the perpetuation of the species.

Now, after one is 40, one is less likely to be subject to these visitations and has a correspondingly greater chance of happiness. For one thing, one has become disillusioned; that is to say, one has exposed some at least of the deceptions with which nature has sought to blind the lover. These once found out, there is a real chance of happiness, for love fulfilled may, with luck, turn homely and dwindle into something small but gracious: for example, into companionship, common interests and mutual trust.

Also, after 40, married people have learnt to make their compromises. You know what married compromises are—a married couple, we will say, are discussing the colour of the dining-room wallpaper. He wants it to be blue, and she wants it to be green. They remind one another that compromise is the essence of a happy marriage, and accordingly decide to compromise, with the result that the colour of the wallpaper is blue (or green).

Marriage—An Incentive or a Handicap?

For the ordinary chap the prospect of marriage is obviously a spur in that it acts as an incentive to work and to "make good."

You fall in love with a girl, want to set up a home, buy furniture, have children. The girl, the home and the children all cost money, and so you work hard, are diligent at the office, toady to the boss, and do everything you can to get yourself promoted and your salary raised.

But suppose you are not an ordinary chap. Suppose you are an artist, or a thinker, or a writer, or a musician, or a pioneer, or an adventurer, or an explorer; or suppose, still worse, that you are a reformer, a Communist, let us say, full of ideals and aflame with revolutionary ardour to remove the palpable injustices of our society. Your views, it is obvious, will challenge orthodox opinion, affront the powerful, and arouse the enmity of the boss and the public.

If you are an original artist, insisting at all costs on doing the work you want to do, instead of doing the work the world is prepared to pay for, you will probably have to starve for a time in a garret in the ordinary way. If you are a moral reformer, or a revolutionary, worse things may happen to you. For example, all through history men have been burned, stoned, crucified, exiled, and imprisoned for holding opinions for which the world now honours them. Some of the most famous trials in history, that of Socrates, that of Giordano Bruno, for example, resulted in the condemnation and execution of men whom posterity has delighted to honour.

What, meanwhile, is happening to the wives of these men? Even the most original genius is nine-tenths ordinary and only one-tenth genius, and the nine-tenths of him fall in love with, and want to marry some perfectly ordinary girl. Now what does she think? Is her husband making good at the office? He is not. Is he getting a decent salary for regular work? The very contrary.

Yet she wants nice clothes like any other woman and the babies want feeding.

Now marriage, to such a man is, it is obvious, not a spur but a drag.

You can read all about that aspect of marriage (if, of course, you want to, and most men don't want to) in the preface to Shaw's "Man and Superman," or in Somerset Maugham's novel, "The Razor's Edge."

Inevitably, in marriage a woman plays for safety and security, and wants the husband to do the same, with the result that over and over again I have seen young men full of intellectual, political or artistic promise, degenerate into the ordinary middle-class husband, going home every evening to the wife, the fireside, the crossword, and the football pool, with all the generous fires of his youthful idealism banked down by the cares and comforts of marriage.

For such a man marriage is a heavy chain to rivet on himself. A woman, of course, doesn't have to rivet the chain; she is born with it attached to her, and marriage is the only way open to her of riveting the other end of it on to a man.

The Sharing of Anxieties

If, like most of us, you are one of the ordinary chaps, who has married because he fell in love with a very ordinary girl, what, I am asked, are you going to do when things go awry in, say, your career or your business? Should a husband, in other words, share his business anxieties with his wife?

There's no definite "Yes" or "No" to this question. It depends so much on the husband, the anxieties, and the wife. If she is in love with him, by all means. Women who are in love with their husbands seem to me to regard them in a double aspect: as warriors who must make their way, and as children who have lost their way.

Regarding them in the former aspect, they encourage their husbands to tell their triumphs; in the latter, to recount their worries and disasters, and then, "My poor boy," they say, "I have a nice supper ready for you, and after that you shall have a pipe; and then I'll put you on a hot bath and shampoo your hair; then I'll give you a couple of aspirins, put you to bed and tuck you up, and if you can't sleep I'll get up and make a cup of tea. And you'll find you'll feel quite differently about it in the morning." And the man with whom the world has gone wrong all day just laps it up.

But, of course, for this treatment, the woman has got to love her husband, and I doubt if many do after the first year or so of marriage.

Facing the Facts about Marriage

And now, of course, I know what is going to happen. I shall be told that I'm a cynic. What you need, the women will say, is to meet a really good woman. She will change your horrible views. If it is cynical to describe the facts, then I concede the word.

Why blame me for having the temerity to mention what everybody knows?

I see no harm whatever in marriage, provided that it is dissoluble. Surely, if it is held to be a sufficient reason for two people getting married that they want to be married, then it ought to be a sufficient reason for their ceasing to be married that they want no longer to be married. The remedy for marriage is to make divorce easy, cheap, and honourable for all.

Husbands who know that their wives could escape their tyranny might be induced to extend to them the same civility which they reserve for their acquaintances. Wives might stop nagging husbands if they knew that they might have to nag the empty air. Moreover,

it is a good general principle that prisoners no longer find prison irksome if the door is open for escape.

As for children, it is, to my mind, far better that they should be brought up by kindly, trained, and competent people, paid by the community to do the job, than that their outlook on life should be formed and tainted by the continuous spectacle of ill-matched and, therefore, ill-tempered, quarrelling parents, with the result that all too often the average family is a little brick box of ill-assorted contents, with the old hating and thwarting the young for behaving like young people, and the young hating and spiting the old for behaving like old people.

I am suggesting, then, that we should treat marriage in a common-sense way, as we treat any other undertaking, by putting a stop to it if it fails. Now it *will* tend to fail if the sentiments of either partner undergo radical change, and that they will radically change seems to me all too likely. One cannot live for ever on the mountain top. Presently the hot fit passes, one descends to the pedestrian level on which most of life must be passed, and, inevitably, one's sentiments alter.

I believe that it would lead to a real increase in human happiness if we made provision for that change of sentiment in our institutions, which means making marriage dissoluble at the will of either partner, provided that that will is persistently maintained over a reasonable period, say, 12 months.

If it be said that men and women should select their partners more intelligently, it can only be replied that whatever it is that, in pursuance of its purpose, pitchforks us into life, pitchforks us, in pursuance of the same purpose, into the arms of some person who may be totally uncongenial. In order to ensure the continuance of life. That, as I have said, is the disconcerting thing about falling in love. Hitherto we have belonged to ourselves, passed our own judgments, made our own free choices, and now life suddenly comes along, takes us up by the scruff of the neck and hurls us at somebody with

differing tastes, different politics, different religion, no conversation, and a vile temper, merely because life sees in our combination with that person the best device for the continuation of the species.

"What about that cure of meeting a good woman?"

"There's nothing in it. I've met them."

Holidays Apart

Of all the difficulties and drawbacks of marriage, the greatest, I believe, is its everlasting dailiness. By the dailiness of marriage, I mean that the same face is always there to greet you on the pillow with its smile or its scowl when you wake up in the morning, to look at you across the breakfast table, to be seen made up for company and not made up for home, with its head in curling papers, red with a cold, running at the nose, suffering from the hiccups, exposed to all the other thousand and one accidents and incidents of domesticity.

Don't you agree with me that is a terrible thought? Not at all! Quite the contrary, you may say if you are in love. Quite the contrary, I agree then, for fifty weeks of the year. But for fifty-two? If that same face is there for fifty-two, the same face animated by the same mind, the same emotions, the same limited stock of ideas, will not the everlasting daily presence wear away even the strongest love?

If you are a man you need the society of other men, at least for one week (do I exaggerate if I say for two weeks of the year?) — men with whom you can play games, crack jokes, drink beer, indulge in leg-pulling and the hundred and one jolly companionships of men together. It is possible, for all I know, though I have never seen much evidence of it, that women might tolerate, might even enjoy other women's company for a couple of weeks.

That is one of the reasons why I am all in favour of husbands and wives having holidays apart from each other.

When the holiday is over you go back again, eager, vivid, bright-eyed, agog to see wife or husband again, with the news of new experiences, with the joy of re-entering again the home which seems so pleasant and attractive after the change.

Does Absence Make the Heart Grow Fonder?

This is only another way of saying that absence makes the heart grow fonder. But don't take that too literally. Absence does make the heart grow fonder for a time, but only for a time. After that it grows fainter. Nobody that I ever knew has yet succeeded in remaining in love with a woman whom he has never seen for twenty years.

Two things strike one to-day, the great increase in the number of divorces and the mounting wave of bigamy. The Recorder of London ascribes the growth of bigamy to the disjointed and separated lives that people have been forced to live during the war. In the case of many young married couples, the husband has been whisked overseas by the Forces almost before the pair had got to know each other. Suppose the hearts were not very fond to begin with. Then faintness rapidly supervenes. In fact, faintness may be felt as a relief when some tall, handsome, upstanding young stranger comes along with a bright face, a cheerful manner, and a new uniform.

Well, what would you? Nature takes her course and, presently, the absent husband, not having been heard of for a year or more, one hopes he never will be heard of. The wish being father to the thought, one marries again.

Divorce and the Church

I am all in favour, as I have said, of easy divorce. Thank goodness the social stigma attached to persons concerned in divorce cases is rapidly disappearing. I was all the more surprised to be told of a Peterborough church organist who after divorcing his first wife some years ago had been suspended by the church authorities pending consideration of his second marriage.

Had church authorities a right to interfere in such a case? None that I could see. The only reasonable rule in such matters is that which was, and, I believe, still is the rule of the Civil Service (though not of the B.B.C. in Lord Reith's time) that the employing body is entitled to take cognizance of the private lives of its staff only when, *because of their private lives*, they are prejudiced in the efficient performance of the duties for which they are employed.

Now, I cannot conceive that an organist is a worse organist, that he plays less effectively, that his music sounds less impressive, or that people delight any the less in the hearing of it, because he has re-married. Has he committed a crime? No. Has he even been divorced? No. Has he, therefore, done anything wrong? No. Would he even have done anything wrong if, having been divorced, he had then re-married? No. For why should a man who has made a mistake in his marriage be compelled to drag out a life of perpetual misery with the alternatives of loneliness and celibacy or furtively, with social ostracism as the penalty for discovery?

Why, in fact, should marriage be the only human venture in which a man is not allowed to make a mistake and then to rectify it out of his greater experience? The Church would presumably answer that anybody connected with it must, like Cæsar's wife, be above sexual reproach. Why? I wonder. The Church has always attached an exaggerated importance to sex to the neglect of all other manner of failings in the Church itself.

Again, look at the world! The whole of western civilisation is

still busily engaged in perfecting itself in the art of slaughtering its neighbour, thereby, I should have thought, running directly contrary to the express commandment of Christ, Who bade us love our neighbour. Does the Church protest? No, it does not. During the war it was content in all the belligerent countries to preach a holy war at the orders of the State. "Have some perspective. Show a little sense of proportion," one feels inclined to say. "Here is your civilisation hanging on the verge of destruction mainly through its failure to observe the precepts of the religion you are supposed to teach, and yet you can find time to go nosing into the private life of an organist." What about charity? What about not casting the first stone?

Divorce and Legal Damages

Another archaic survival, which is still sanctioned by our legal code, is the system of giving damages to a husband whose wife has been proved faithless.

This, I take it, is a hangover from the time when a woman was a piece of property, a piece of property whom I, the husband, maintained and paid for, so that if somebody makes use of the property which I have spent money in maintaining, I naturally put in a claim for damages, just as I would do if somebody started to dig up the vegetables that I had so carefully planted in my allotment.

Once get away from the view that women are chattels, pieces of property, once admit that they are human beings, with souls and rights of their own, and you have to admit that they have a right to live their own lives. Living their own lives means placing their affections where they like, transferring them when they like, with the corollary you have no right to complain.

For my part, I am wholly in favour of the Equal Citizenship Bill which the Women's Publicity Planning Association are backing, a Bill which seeks to give effect to the principle of absolute equality before the law as between the sexes. As a consequence, however, I deduce that women should not expect me to look after them, entertain them, and, above all, pay for them when they honour me with their company. I note that most women seem averse from accepting this consequence.

On Marrying Again

The same conception of the woman as a chattel owned by her husband lies at the root of the wills many men insist on making in which a widow is heavily punished financially if she re-marries. Is it right for the hand of a dead man to attempt to control the life of a living person?

Two questions are involved. The first is the question of a man's right to dispose of his property as he pleases. This does seem to me to be a right, and, provided that the disposition is not socially injurious, as, for example, the leaving of money to foment mutiny in the Army, or to found a college where young men can be trained in the art of seducing young women—it should not be interfered with.

Secondly, and more important, there are the principles which should guide such dispositions. It may not be socially a crime, but it can be ethically a sin, to try to control the lives of living people when one is oneself dead. Now this particular condition, which old gentlemen are in the habit of attaching to their wills, depriving their widows of the money that has been left to them should they marry again seems to me to be ethically a sin.

It is an ethical sin because it involves the sin of vanity. "What this woman can dare to look at another man after me? Hell, I

will take it out of her!" Vanity, then, here, and the desire for revenge of one who is wounded. It is an ethical sin because, founded on the notion of the ownership of women, it seeks to perpetuate the rights of ownership after one's death. But women are not pieces of property to be owned! Finally, and I think this is the most important point of all, it is ethically sinful because it seeks to fix a woman's affections for all time, and therefore forbids her to develop.

Parents' Consent for Marriage?

No. It is the girl I am going to marry, not her parents, and what she thinks of me and what I think of her is nobody's business but hers and mine.

It seems to me that when two people fall in love their feelings are a matter of concern to nobody but themselves, and that neither parents nor the State have any business to interfere. The community is only concerned when children appear—concerned to see that the children are not neglected. In fact, however, parents seem to think that when they have brought children into the world, and brought them up, they are somehow entitled to a controlling interest over and a right in their emotions.

Mothers are particularly to blame in this respect: they turn home into a girls' prison, and try to keep lovers at arm's length, not liking to think that their daughters should enjoy pleasures denied to themselves by their own lack of charm. And how jealous they are of their sons. How they try to warn girls off, pull the favoured girl to pieces, and talk her down, talk her relations down and her friends. and her religion, and her face; do and say anything, in fact, to frighten her away and frighten the son off and keep him at home.

Sometimes, when one thinks of the affronts that old people put on young people, the restrictions and interferences that they make,

the slights and jealousies that they feel, one wonders why the young don't consign them to the lethal chamber or have them shut up somewhere where they can be harmless.

And so frequently minors have to ask magistrates to give the permission to marry which the parents refuse. What are the principles which should govern the magistrates' decision in such matters? Should they give the young permission to marry or not?

It depends on what you think about marriage. Lifelong, indissoluble marriage for better or worse seems to me to rest upon the fallacy that having ascended to the top of Mont Blanc you can live there always. To fall in love, as everybody has agreed, is a most confusing occurrence. Love inflames the passions, intoxicates the senses, clouds the judgment, destroys the perspective. It is in this state of excited abnormality that we are required to make vows which will bind us when the hot fit has passed, will determine our behaviour and focus our affections when we have returned to normal, quitted the top of Mont Blanc, and gone on our sober pedestrian journey through the plains of middle-age. Is it any wonder that marriages fail? Would it not be a heaven-sent miracle if a lifetime course charted under the influence of such an upsetting emotion were to be faithfully and happily followed when the emotion had subsided.

If you agree that it is *not* a miracle, but only what you'd expect, if you think that the course *can* and *should* nevertheless be followed, if, that is to say, on balance, you think that the entries on the credit side of marriage exceed those on the debit, then, of course, you will put no hindrance in the way of the marriage of the very young, merely because they are young.

Have we over 21's after all made such a success of marriage? Are our homes such models of happiness and affection that we can take it upon ourselves to guide or to forbid the steps of our juniors? If I were a magistrate I hope I should have the humility to hold myself up as a warning and not as an example: which means that

I certainly should not have the presumption to forbid other people to make the same mistakes that I had made myself. After all there is always the chance that they might be wiser or luckier than I and may not make the mistake after all.

Polygamy

Are there any social advantages in polygamy? Well, a number of revered Old Testament figures whose lives we are bidden to read for our edification on Sunday were confirmed polygamists. I don't mean merely such patriarchs as Abraham and Jacob; I am thinking rather of David, who was always held up to me for special admiration, and whom I duly admired, and whose wives seemed to increase with the number of his years.

What is, I think, clear is that our present system of inflexible monogamy is unsatisfactory. Before the war there were two million extra women in this country whom it condemned either to childlessness or to social ostracism if they had children outside marriage. Again, there are many women who have no capacity for marriage—that is to say, for living with and looking after men; no patience to listen to their boasting and their “funny stories,” or tolerance to put up with their foul pipes, carpet slippers, and general slovenliness about the house—who would, nevertheless, make first-rate mothers. Why, then, saddle the right to have a child with the obligation to look after and live with a man?

It surprises me that in the circumstances women should be the severest critics of any departure from the accepted social code. Shaw said somewhere that any woman worth her salt would prefer a fifth share of a first-rate man to a whole share of a fifth-rate man. Speaking for myself, I can only say I haven't found it so. Women, of course, always think of this thing in terms of what they term sexual licence, but it is much more complicated than that.

I, for example, like the company of different women for different purposes—one to go out to dinner with and be merry, another one to go to church with and feel good with, another one to cook for me, another one to mother me when the world's been going badly for me, another one to play games with, another one to make love to. Why should all these different qualities and excellences be combined within the same person?

Now what, it seems to me, I am really saying here is that some people are monogamic by nature and some varietist—most men are secretly varietist, only daren't say so for fear of their wives—and the trouble about the existing system is that it forces everybody into the strait-jacket of the same monogamic mould, whatever their dispositions and their desires. I suggest, then, not any *one* system, but a variety of systems to suit different tastes and temperaments.

Let me end by pointing out how obvious it is that everything I have said is determined by the distinctively man's point of view. What else can you expect? But let me add that women seem to fit with apparently equal ease and content (or equal unease and discontent) into every system, having, so far as I can see, lived under them all, one woman and one man (monogamy), one woman and many men (polyandry), one man and many women (polygamy), one man and successive women, one woman and successive men, and whatever other combination there may be, without apparently raising a protest.

It ought, perhaps, to be added that polygamy has historically entailed the subjection or at least the withdrawal of women, and cannot easily be practised in a society where women share life and go out into the world on equal terms with men. But, I repeat, the upshot is that there ought not to be any one system, but different systems for different people according to their natures, needs and temperaments.

The Family as a Social Institution

I think, first of all, of the conventional conception of the family as a little globule of mutually loving and loved persons stewing away in a sort of treacle pond of affection from the cradle to the grave; and then I think of the families that I have known, little brick boxes of ill-assorted humanity of different ages, interests, and tastes.

I think of the family as coming to its blossoming period in the Victorian age, of the Victorian family as the really successful family, and then I remember that the Victorian family was usually so large that it approximated more to the conception of a community than to that of a family with its half a dozen or more children growing up together, in a little republic of their own, and having precious little contact with their parents except on state or special occasions such as Christmas.

Was this good for the children or bad? Are parents really qualified to bring up their children at all, or should the job be done by the State? There is no clear cut answer. It depends upon the parents and upon the State. My own view is that, as things are, the more of the State and the less of the parents the better.

Most parents think they are good for their children. I see little ground for this assumption. Just look at us parents and the world which between us we have made. Do you really want our children to be like us? Any parent with an ounce of humility would hold himself up as a warning rather than as an example.

Think again of the conditions of the average home. In middle-class homes with one or, at most, two children the child is apt to be lonely and to occupy too entirely the attention of some under-employed mother, with the result that he is, alternatively, snubbed or spoiled. Oh, those terrible outpourings of mother love!

In working-class homes four or five children will be brought up with inadequate space, with nowhere to play, with no quiet or darkness for sleep, without proper food, and alternately cursed

and neglected by a harassed mother with a baby on her lap and another on the way.

What of the upper class home with every advantage that money can give? The ordinary mother (upper class) has apparently little affection for her children, for she contrives to see as little of them as she possibly can, and, if she has the money, invariably spends it in employing other people to bring them up for her, from the nurse to the governess; from the governess to the vacation tutor; from the vacation tutor to the preparatory school, the public school, and the university, so that the only parents who really see much of their children are those who have not got enough money to pay other people to take them off their hands.

This may seem to you to be a mere outburst of spleen on the part of a bad son, a bad husband and a bad father; maybe, yet it seems to me there is a solid basis for it. If you want to build a house or a ship you go to an expert architect or shipwright and delegate to him the job of building them for you. But if you want to build something which is much more important than either, namely, a human being, who is to be a citizen of a democratic State, you are content to leave the job to any chance couple of persons who happen to be able to produce it, which, granted that they be of opposite sexes, is all too fatally easy. And that we recognise this in our hearts – although we will go to any length of hypocrisy to avoid the recognition – the constant and growing incursions of the State into family life bear witness.

Because families cannot be left to themselves, without committing numberless offences against humanity, because parents cannot safely be entrusted with the care of their children, the State has to step in, and step in increasingly, to protect or remove them from parental control; to prevent parents from beating or starving their children; to prevent them from sending their children to work in factories or mines at an age so tender that they are obviously unfitted to do anything but play; to prevent them from refusing to educate them;

to prevent them from putting children to sleep four or five in a room; to prevent parents, in other words, from doing a hundred and one things which left to their own devices they have always insisted upon doing to the detriment of their children for their own convenience or profit.

All of which is a way of saying that if you happen to be born into a good family, well and good. If you happen to have been born, as many of us are, into a bad one, then it is the business of the State to step in to protect helpless children from the unrestricted incidence of the so-called benefits and advantages of family life.

Most of us, I think, in the circumstances would be better off at school: to which I would add, even at boarding school, believing as I do, first, that the bringing up of children is an expert job, and, secondly, that the right environment for a child is the company not of his elders but of his contemporaries. But, of course, there are all sorts of exceptions to these generalisations. Some schools are awful and some parents are admirable. Finally, some kids are not only temporarily but permanently miserable away from home.

None of this, by the way, is an argument against family reunions at Christmas. Almost any family is tolerable provided one only sees it occasionally, and at Christmas-time, when people are festive and gay, when they have plenty to drink and eat, even families can contrive to get on very well with one another for 24 hours. But not much more. How glad we are, most of us, to disperse and go about our separate business when the Christmas family gathering is over.

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Training for Fatherhood?

Some young girls are trained for motherhood, and so, says a certain school of thought, young men should be trained for fatherhood. What nonsense! The father's part in the production of children is pleasurable but tiny, and in their nurture and upbringing, small,

disagreeable and largely superfluous. What is more, most men have very little propensity for looking after and attending to the wants of small children.

It is important, I think, to make a distinction between physical needs and moral and mental ones. Now it is, of course, essential that the physical needs of the child should be attended to. And the more expertly, the better. For example, not to swaddle the baby in too many clothes; to know how and when to feed it; to know one must not keep small children up too late or permit them to wander about the streets at night, or wait outside doors of pubs, or to go to bed in lighted rooms, or where there is noise.

But when we come to the child's mind and morals, how little do we know, and how little can we give in the way of instruction? Certain obvious things, perhaps, in the way of manners! Not to eat peas with the knife, drink soup out of a tureen, blow your nose with your fingers, or pick it in public, but beyond these elementary things it seems to me that the wise parent will do well to say to the child, "Whatever you do, don't be like me."

In sum, so far as mental and moral instruction is concerned there is precious little we can give; so far as physical care is concerned, there is much to be given and much, therefore, to be learned. Now the physical care and treatment of small children is the province of the mother; therefore, you should train girls for motherhood though you cannot train boys for fatherhood.

The Family Tree

Not thinking very highly of the family as a social institution, I cannot feel that it matters very much whether you come of a famous family or not. Some people, the Chinese for example, worship their ancestors. I have never been able to understand why.

A man and a woman are not necessarily admirable because they

begat and brought into the world those who begat and brought into the world *me*. Nor can I understand the desire for a family tree, which apparently animates Americans. For my part, I would sooner stand on my own feet than try to cut a figure in the world because of the age or grandeur of my family. I should have thought that Americans, who set such store by individuality and independence, would have echoed the sentiment.

It is, I suppose, because one needs reassurance in one's own person, that one tries to obtain the needed assurance by invoking the names of one's ancestors; because one is conscious of inferiority that one seeks a pedigree in order to feel superior. People, particularly Americans, should have more confidence in themselves. There they are, all alive and kicking, why do they need reassurance from the dead?

As for having famous parents, nothing I imagine could be worse. A young man or woman wants to stand on his or her own feet, and to be accepted for himself or herself on his or her own merits, and not to be regarded merely as the child of a famous parent.

"What, are you Mr. Joad's daughter? How very exciting. Do tell me about him." What can be more infuriating for a poor girl wanting to make her own way in society and be accepted for herself? How my children have raged against me because when they are introduced to people, instead of taking notice of them, they immediately start to refer to a parent in whom at the moment my children haven't the slightest interest.

On Happiness, Love, Virtues and Vices

Happiness

"That's the enormous stupidity of the young people of this generation," said Mrs. Quarles in Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point*, "they never think of life except in terms of happiness. How shall I have a good time? That's the question they ask. Or they complain. Why am I not having a better time? . . . Everybody strains after happiness, and the result is that nobody's happy."

Another generation has succeeded the generation Mrs. Quarles was talking about, but that has not affected the truth of her remarks. Happiness is not something to be pursued directly; if it is, it will elude you. No, the best recipe I can give for happiness is an old one, occupation. For occupation is preoccupation, and when I am preoccupied I am much too interested in what I am doing to have time to wonder whether I am miserable. That surely is the recipe for happiness—not to have enough leisure to wonder whether you are miserable or not.

Aristotle says somewhere that the good life consists in the exercise of our highest faculties screwed up to concert pitch, devoted to a subject matter which is appropriate to them, and worthy of them, the point of this latter phrase being that what we do must be worthy of the effort that we spend upon it, and not wholly below our powers. It is not good enough for a skilled farmer to spend all his time carting dung, for Schnabel to teach schoolgirls to play the piano, or Einstein to give lessons in elementary physics! When

we are engaged at full stretch on something which seems to us worth doing, whether it is leading a forlorn hope, getting in the harvest, writing a book, or feeding and bathing the baby, then, when we look back, we shall realise that we have been happy.

Happiness, then, is a by-product of activity, something which, as Aristotle says, is like the bloom on the cheek of the young man in perfect health. The bloom is not a factor in the health; it is a sign of it.

Similarly, happiness is not a necessary factor in or an object of worth-while activity; it is a *sign* that the organism is properly employed. If we concentrate our attention upon ourselves, we become nervous little clods of wants and ailments, perpetually complaining that the world will not organise itself with a view to making us happy. But forget yourself, give all your energies to a creed or cause, use yourself up to the last ounce of your capacity in effort and endeavour, discipline yourself in co-operation with your fellows – in other words, lift yourself up out of the selfish little pit of vanity and desire which is self by losing yourself in something which is greater than yourself, and, looking back, you will find that you have been happy.

You cannot take the kingdom of happiness by storm; you can only enter it by accident, when you are eagerly going somewhere else. Happiness, then, is always in the nature of an accident or surprise. It is not a house that can be built by man's hands, but a song that you hear as you pass the hedge rising suddenly and simply into the night, and dying down again. That is why, I think, many people have been happy in the war. They have been busy, busy, too, in co-operation with their fellows, and busy on behalf of something they believe in and that is worth while.

It is interesting, by the way, to notice that the suicide rate among the unemployed rich who had nothing to do but amuse themselves on the Riviera before the war was higher than the suicide rate among the unemployed poor in a depressed area such as Jarrow.

The "Happy Medium"

Another sound recipe for happiness in life – and do let us give a little thought to the duty of being happy; there is no duty which we so persistently under-rate – is "Nothing too much," which is one of the best-known maxims of the Greek philosophers; to which I would add "Almost everything a little!"

And for an obvious reason. Unless you develop all sides of your being – body, mind, spirit, senses – then the part that you are neglecting will grumble and protest, and its grouses will make you miserable and restless, though you don't know it. Let us obey, then, all the demands of our nature, yet let none command our nature. If you want to know what the demands of our nature are, refer to the pursuits that human beings have followed through hundreds of years and for which, therefore, there is a natural itch in the blood. Pray a little, compete a little, play a little, dig a little in the ground – very important this – swim a little, quarrel a little, make love a little, go on the sea in ships, watch the seasons change and the blossoms set, help a little in the harvest, and you will be happy.

But don't so develop any one of your desires that you become a slave to it. This, of course, demands a certain amount of discipline, because you have got to learn not only when to stop but – something much more difficult – to learn to stop while you still wish to continue. Always, in other words, stop doing things while you still want to go on doing them, and then you won't get bored and sated. It is a well-known maxim with theatrical producers always to give their artistes a rest when they are at the top of their popularity; that is to say, they take them off when people still want to hear them. (The B.B.C., incidentally, adopted the same principle in regard to the Brains Trust.) In exactly the same way call off your desires before they are satisfied. Don't smoke the last cigarette, don't drink the

third glass of wine, and stop kissing the girl while you and she are still ready for more.

One other tip, I think, is this. Journalists tell you to write about people, not things. Perhaps, but if you want to be happy put your trust in things, because things, unlike people, don't change and don't, therefore, let you down. They are always there. It was William Hazlitt who said: "There are only three pleasures in life pure and lasting, and all derive from inanimate things – books, pictures, and the face of nature." For my part I would add music, chess, and eating and drinking. There is a good deal to be said for Dr. Johnson's view that "there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn."

Other inanimate things which make you happy are money-making, doing well in business, and work; work, that is to say, of almost any kind. Work is pleasanter than pleasure because it engages more of your faculties. It doesn't *look* as if it is so much fun, but it is; indeed, as I have said above, the only way to avoid being miserable is not to give yourself enough leisure to wonder whether you are happy or not. But even work you should not do too much.

Effects of Good and Bad News

The effect of good news on the health of the individual and of the nation ought, one would suppose, to be first-rate. You will see in a minute why I qualify my statement with the words "one would suppose."

It is impossible to overstress the intimacy of the relation between the mind and body. If I see a ghost, my hair stands on end; if I am frightened my face turns pale; if I am shocked (not that this often happens, by the way), it blushes. All these are effects of the mind on the body. If I drink too much I see two lamp-posts instead

of one; if I have a late supper of cold pork and pickles, I have a nightmare and see blue devils; if I inhale nitrous dioxide gas, I have a celestial vision and appear to hold conversation with the Almighty and His angels (at least, I may do so). It is to be expected, then, that the exhilaration of the mind should produce beneficial effects on the body. The connection, of course, is clearer in the case of bad news. Those who receive bad news are apt to suffer from palpitations, headaches, diarrhœa.

Now, if you are always getting bad news – if, in fact, life gives you a continuously bad report – your body tries to escape from it altogether.

How does it do this? By featuring an illness. Thus the Victorian woman, over-burdened with child-bearing and male dominance, took permanently to her sofa. Psychology is full of accounts of people who produce illnesses which they haven't really got because of psychological maladjustment to life. The trouble is that you cannot, in these cases, easily distinguish between an illness that a man hasn't really got and an illness that he has, because the body of the psychologically miserable person may exhibit all the symptoms which might be anticipated in an illness arising from a physiological cause.

Good news should make us not only happy but well. If I knew enough about the workings of the body, I could indicate the nature of the mechanism involved. In fact, I believe the ductless glands of the exhilarated man secrete more than a usual abundant supply of hormones into the blood stream.

And now for the reservation at the beginning. You will remember that through half of 1940 and all 1941 we were, as a nation, in continual receipt of bad news. What a lot we had to put up with! Yet, with the exception of tuberculosis and venereal disease, the health of the nation was never better. That, I suppose, was because during all that period people whose lives had hitherto been empty and useless were being used to their utmost capacity in the service

of the nation, and had been made to feel significant and important. That is to say, made to feel happy.

Loneliness

Most lonely people are lonely because they haven't enough interests to stop them from wondering whether they are lonely or not. The happy person is he whose leisure, as well as his work, is to him so full of interest that he has no time left in which to think about himself. To be interested in things, hobbies, creeds, causes, is the best superficial recipe I know for a non-lonely life. Not only is such an interest a good thing in itself because it helps you to forget yourself, but inevitably it brings you into touch with other people.

So far as my experience goes, few of the human contacts which have been valuable in my life have been made in and for their own sakes. They have all arisen in connection with a common interest, a common job, a common cause, or a common holiday.

When I was a young man and first came to London, not knowing a soul, I joined the Fabian Society because I cared for Socialism, and immediately was thrown into contact with a lot of other people who were interested in Socialism too. By all means let people be encouraged to join the Fabian Society, but from the point of view of curing loneliness, I must admit that the local Entomological Society (butterfly collectors and bug-hunters), the local Red Cross, or the local glee club will do as well.

I am connected with a body called the Ramblers' Association, which consists of clubs which organise expeditions of young people into the countryside at week-ends. Two of these clubs have within recent years, to my knowledge, been started by young women who, coming to strange towns and not knowing a soul, but caring for the country and wanting to meet people, put advertisements into the local paper saying, in effect, "Would anybody like to come for a walk

next Sunday? If so, meet at such-and-such a place, at such-and-such a time." From such humble origins large rambling clubs have been formed, and I guarantee that, whatever else the members may be, they are not lonely.

Happiness and Money

There exists a common idea that full, adequate and pleasurable living depends upon the expenditure of money, that entertainment is something for which you must pay, and that you cannot, therefore, lead a happy life unless you have the money to pay somebody to entertain you.

I don't believe it for a moment. I would like to put it on record that apart from one's necessary comforts, food (I spend plenty on that) and drink (and I spend plenty on that), and warmth and clothes, which any middle-class person can take for granted (of course, nine out of every ten people who have ever lived were very far from being able to take them for granted), I want money for three things.

They are books, music, and being able to go as often as I like to the country and spend as much time as I like there. Whenever I have been hard up, I have insisted on having luxuries such as these and dispensed with so-called necessities, such as baths, haircuts, and decent clothes.

Clothes don't matter much to me. I regard them not even as an adornment, not even as a necessity, but as a damned nuisance, and the result is that people are always telling me in tones of shocked delight that I am an incurably slovenly and ill-dressed man.

One great advantage of this is that it acts as a touchstone of one's acquaintances, separating out the sheep, as it were, from the goats. Because whenever my shabby and ill-fitting garments have led somebody to disown or to cut me, their action in so doing affords

irrefutable evidence that they are persons whom it is not worth while for me to know. Nobody one ever cares about, or who cares about one, ever cares two hoots how one is dressed – not, at least, if one is a man.

The Stages of Love

From happiness one passes by a natural transition to love; for when one is in love, one is either very happy or very unhappy. But what is love? I think I know, but I don't know how to describe it. For love was meant to be enjoyed, not described.

Of course, all sorts of definitions spring to the mind. That "If love is a disease, marriage is a sanatorium for the cure of it." That "Love is the bait on life's hook whereby men and women are induced to take the steps which are necessary to the perpetuation of the species." I could go on with these clevernesses at the expense of love to the end of the book, but they don't help us much, all being the utterances of those who, having failed in, call "sour grapes" at love.

I think there are, broadly, three stages of love. First, there is the farmyard stage. Love at this level is a biological phenomenon, an affair of the body; its object the continuance of the species.

The second is love between human beings. This, at the best, can be an affair of the whole personality, the body is included – in fact, the attraction of bodies may be the basis – but sexual attraction is transcended and caught up into a larger whole, in which mind, spirit, and taste are all enlisted to contribute their quota to the complex sentiment. Such love is one of the best things that can happen to human beings. To many of us it never happens at all, and even those of us who do experience it can rarely keep it up. You can get to the top of Mont Blanc, but you cannot live there. Sooner or later you descend to the pedestrian levels on which you

must walk with the loved person through furniture-buying, house-hiring, baby-begetting and bearing, scraping and economising to send the kiddies to school, "keeping it up with the Joneses" next door, and all the rest of the toothaches and pimples, the cares and trivialities of the experience which is known as marriage.

The passion in love is now appeased, and what was a roaring lion dwindles into something gracious and homely. That is the best you can hope. One thinks now of the fireside love of the old married couple, bound by an affection that has been strengthened by a lifetime of common trials, common interests, common ownership of furniture and houses, common hopes and disappointments in children, and all the rest of it. But in my experience this homely aftermath of love's passion is comparatively rare. We should not make such a fuss about Darbys and Joans if they were not so uncommon; if they weren't, in fact, totally unrepresentative.

Then the third level, the level at which love has risen above its origins in the body, cast aside the scaffolding of personality on which it rose, and become pure spirit. Man, as spirit, loves the highest that spirit is capable of discerning—beauty in literature, paint and sound, the beauty of nature, and, in the last resort, God. Here we are glimpsing a level of experience on which perhaps we may ultimately aspire to live. In the love of the artist for his vision, of the scholar for truth, and the saint for God, we can glimpse, and in unrepresentative moments we can, even in our earthly condition, enjoy this love, but we cannot hold it.

The Pangs of Love

The so-called pangs of unrequited or disappointed love occur in what I have styled the second stage. While they're on, they are unappeasable, and one of the most distressing features of the com-

plaint is that the sufferer is unable to believe that they will ever be "off."

I remember that the last time I suffered from unrequited love – in other words, from being jilted – (thank God, it is 25 years ago) I went to the wisest man I knew, who was then Bertrand Russell, and asked him what I could do about it. I may remark that I was very bad, bad enough to play with the idea of suicide and even half-heartedly to attempt it in circumstances in which I felt pretty sure that I should be detected before I'd finished and stopped.

Bertrand Russell had no remedy to offer, but "I may tell you," he said, "that, though it is hell while it lasts, it won't last for ever." I could not believe it, would not believe it, and did not believe it, and hated him for what seemed to be his lack of sympathy and understanding.

But, for all that, it was true. When the pangs begin to abate, though not till then, it is useful to have as many other interests as possible, to touch life, in fact, at as many points as possible. An interest in many external things, whatever they may be, is the best safeguard against the obsession of any one of them, even, of any one woman, and as the waters of passion begin to recede, the customary interests – in my case in music, in books, in philosophy, in the country, in tennis, in chess, in bridge, and, above all, in other women – begin to trickle back into their accustomed channels.

I would like to put it on record here that though education, the cultivation of the mind, and the activity of the spirit don't prevent a man from making a fool of himself over a woman, or indeed, over anything else, they do, in my opinion, help to alleviate his worst distress – it is, for example, a sort of consolation to read the poetry of others who were in your own plight – and, as the distress begins to abate, so do they begin to console.

Let me finally emphasise as the last interest on my list – other women – in other words, a hair of the dog that bit you. It is a good piece of advice never to run after a bus or a woman, since

there will always be another along in a moment. This is peace-time advice, of course! In war-time there aren't so many buses or so many women – or, rather, there are more men.

Love-Letters

What are we to do with old love-letters? Keep them? I have kept mine in the hope that one day I may read them. Just as I have written a lot of books in order to have something to read when I get old (after all, nobody can know what I should like to read as well as I do myself, so I'd better make some provision for my old age while I'm still capable of writing), so I have done my best to evoke and preserve love-letters as an occupation and solace for my old age.

Reading them – I have not done it yet – is the sort of thing that is apt to produce philosophic reflections. Just think, one will say to oneself, of all that fuss and agitation and excitement; of dancing attendance on the loved woman; of being kept waiting – how one *was* kept waiting – by her; of the ecstatic suspense of standing on the railway platform looking for her train to arrive; of the blank dismay at missing her, and the telegrams and the telephone messages when you did miss her; of the complete overshadowing of one's whole life by the preoccupying figure of the loved woman, of the delicious and overpowering satisfaction of her presence, and the aching void when she went away. And then you read the letters and realise that not only has it all come to nothing, but that it is all as though it never had been.

And so, reading and reflecting, you have learned to rate what is called love, that inflammation of the senses and exaltation of the spirit whereby life secures the continuation of the species at its true value, and find yourself echoing the sentiments of much greater men than yourself – of Shakespeare, for instance: "Men have died

from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love"; or of Dr. Johnson: "Love is only one of many passions, and it has no great influence on the sum of life"; or even of Dr. Jowett, the Master of Balliol College: "Young men make great mistakes in life; for one thing, they idealise love too much" – and you think at last that you have learned a little wisdom.

And that these valuable reflections may occur to you, the record of your past delights, agitations, and follies, of those soft torments, bitter sweets, painful pleasures, and agreeable distresses that we call love, must be there to revive your memory. These things, you will then say to yourself, really must have happened. I can't believe it now, but they really did.

There is another reason, too, for my hoarding. As one gets older, it becomes increasingly difficult to remember one's past life and one's past loves. And yet, sometimes, one wants to remember them. I tried to do it myself some time ago in a dull hour during the black-out in a train. I was appalled to find how many of the adventures of my youth had gone beyond recall, that I could not remember their names, that I could not even remember their faces; and by "their" I mean, I suppose, those of the women whom I have loved, because when you are trying to remember your past life the women in it are like signposts: a Miss, in fact, is as good as a milestone.

But why remember them? Why remember one's past life? Well, they happened specially and privately to you, they will never happen again, and if you don't remember them, nobody else will. I cannot flatter myself that the things which have happened to me will be of the slightest interest to anybody else.

I emphasise the *things* which have happened to me, not the ideas that have occurred to me. I think my ideas supremely important, though my life has been negligible; and since nobody else will remember these events that once seemed so important, it is due to

my own self-respect that I should at least try to remember them myself.

Besides, by reading old love-letters one can see how one has changed: one sees how the thing, the person, and, above all, the woman whose importance swelled till she dominated the horizon has now shrunk to nothingness, and one is warned not to attribute too much seriousness to the things, or too much importance to the people who happen to one now.

Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe – (everything gets tired, everything gets broken, everything passes) in fact – and thank God it does, since it is only because it does that we can go on to new things.

Fear and Courage

Bravery exemplifies the paradox of morality, that all virtue involves a necessary admixture of weakness, even of vice, over which the virtuous man achieves a victory. That sounds rather portentous, but let us apply it to the case of courage and fear.

The bull who, maddened by the darts of the picadors, hurls himself on the matador is not brave, nor is the madman who leaps over a precipice, rushes into the sea, or walks unconcerned into a revolver bullet. When we blur a man's consciousness, take away, therefore, his consciousness of fear by doping him with rum, we say not that he has courage, but that he has Dutch courage.

Unless, then, you are sensible of danger, the question of courage does not arise; but to be sensible of danger is to feel fear, for unless you recognise something to be dangerous you don't feel fear. The brave man, then, is not the man who does not feel fear, but the man who feels it and overcomes it.

How does he overcome it? By a greater fear of something else. The point is made admirably in the speech by Napoleon in Shaw's play, "The Man of Destiny." Every man, Napoleon points out,

has a natural tendency to shrink away in fear from a hillside bristling with cannons belching shot and shell. The brave man overcomes this fear, goes forward and captures the hill. Why does he? Because he is more afraid of something else. Of what else? Or doing what is disgraceful, of running away, of letting his comrades down, of the pricks and stings of his outraged conscience; in a word, of doing what is shameful.

Socrates makes the same point. The difference between the brave man and the coward is not the difference between not feeling fear and feeling it. It is the difference between knowing what is truly formidable, and ought, therefore, to be feared, and what is not. In other words, the difference between the brave man and the coward is not so much a difference between courage and fear as the difference between the things of which they are respectively afraid.

The difference between them, as Socrates insists, is then a difference of knowledge. The brave man knows what is really formidable, what in other words he *ought* to be afraid of; the coward does not.

But just in case the intangible fear of doing what is shameful shall not be a sufficient deterrent, all armies have taken the precaution of backing it by discipline, discipline being a device to ensure that you won't run away by threatening you with a court-martial for cowardice or desertion if you do. As a wit said in the last war but one, discipline is a device for substituting the certainty of being shot if you don't go over the top for the probability of being shot if you do.

The man that we honour is the man whom we know to feel fear but who nevertheless overcomes it. The man who feels no fear has no virtue. Courage, then, consists in knowing what is fearful, estimating its fearfulness, and then going forward and facing and overcoming it. It seems to me that here we have the explanation of that fact so frequently noticed that the man who is brave in one department is cowardly in another. The airman who faces without flinching the "flak" of the enemy's guns may be terrified of

the darkness and potential disasters of the mine. The reason is to be found in a difference of knowledge. The dangers of the one he knows and of the dangers of the other he is ignorant. Courage, then, involves at least an element of knowledge.

All this, of course, is only saying in a paradoxical way that courage is not a physical but a moral quality. It is the overcoming of a natural fear of pain or disablement by a moral fear of doing what is disgraceful. Hence only a moral being can have courage.

Is Heroism Hereditary?

I don't think heroism runs in families, though many people will be delighted to point to members of the same family successively getting the V.C. The illusion which causes us to think that it may be hereditary is a familiar one. If I am a V.C. and my brother-in-law is not, nobody hears of it; if I am a V.C. and my brother-in-law *is*, the fact is remarkable and gets noticed.

The first class of case happens a million times; the second once in a million, but because the "once" is noted and the million times are not, one gets the impression that there is some *connection* between the V.C. who is myself and the V.C. who is my brother-in-law – that is, one thinks heroism runs in families.

We all of us, as I pointed out above, have a natural tendency to flinch from what is dangerous. And I quoted Socrates in support of my contention that the difference between the brave man and the coward is a difference of knowledge. But isn't that only putting in a roundabout way what we mean by such words as "discipline," "*esprit de corps*," "loyalty," all these being devices for making us fear the things that we ought to fear, namely, doing what is shameful, of being cowardly, instead of the things which we ought not to fear, namely, death and wounds.

Now, *esprit de corps*, loyalty, discipline, and the rest are very

largely the result of training and environment. Take the case of the man trained at Sandhurst and in the Guards: there we see unvarying rigid discipline resulting in loyalty; intense *esprit de corps*, and scarcely ever a case of cowardice. Training and environment, therefore, account for most of the courage; perhaps, however, not for just that little bit extra which makes a hero.

The “Minor Blitz” of 1944

Do you remember the February raids of 1944? How we were more conscious of them and minded them more than the bigger and more continuous ones earlier on? I don't think the reason for this had anything to do with fear or courage.

In 1940-1941 we couldn't see through to the end of the tunnel. The war went on for most of us without much hope of victory within any foreseeable time, without even much hope of personal survival. So the only thing to do was to set our teeth, grin and bear it, which we did.

Then in 1944, we began to see the light at the end of the tunnel. We felt what a sell it would be if we personally did not emerge. When the cup of victory was filling, how tantalising it would have been if it had been dashed from our lips! In other words, the nearer one is to the end of the race, the keener one is to finish it, and the more peeved one would feel to drop out with the winning post in sight. Of all the casualties in the last war for whom one feels sorry, none wrings one's heart so much as the fate of the chaps who were killed on Armistice Day.

I don't mind very much about being killed – at least, I don't think I mind; nobody can tell until it comes to the point – but I did mind very much about my library, the room in which I had lived for 30 years. During 1940 and 1941 I contemplated its disappearance with comparative equanimity, thinking that its destruction would

be only my small part in the general tragedy. But how sickening if it had been burnt out just before the end of the war.

There was another reason. 1940 and 1941 saw us all keyed up. It is difficult to keep yourself keyed up. The capacity for heroism, the capacity even for endurance, like any other capacity, gets fatigued. The first half-hour of drilling at the dentist's one may be able to stand pretty well; it is the next five minutes that seem intolerable. Similarly, the man who was withstood torture nine times running breaks down under the same torture the tenth time.

Fanaticism

In fighting a war, there is no question but that a race of fanatics make both the best soldiers and the most successful army.

However well you may train and discipline the ordinary soldier, he still does not want to lose his life, and he does not believe he will acquire special merit by depriving somebody else of life.

Now if you are a fanatic, for example, a Mohammedan, you believe that by dying in battle you will go to heaven and enjoy unlimited drinks and women. Also, you believe that your enemies are displeasing to God, and that, therefore, by reducing their number you will incur special favour in God's eyes and, once again, will go to heaven. You have, therefore, an added incentive to kill the enemy, and a potent bribe, the bribe of an eternity of sensual happiness, to incur every risk, even the risk of death, in doing so.

It is worth noting that armies imbued by strong religious zeal, armies which are thereby made fanatical, have always been extremely effective. History gives us the examples of Cromwell's Ironsides and the Dancing Dervishes. French and Russian Revolutionaries were also imbued with religious zeal though hitched on to Reason, in the first case, and to Marx in the second, instead of God.

Conscience and Cowardice

Conscience is most properly to be regarded as a sort of sixth sense which operates within the sphere of right and wrong, informing us of what is good and what is bad in conduct, just as the sense of smell inform us of what smells good and smells bad.

Most writers on morals have maintained that, beside reporting to us that this is right and that is wrong, conscience impels us to do the former and refrain from the latter. Unfortunately its power of impelling and restraining is not so strong as its power of reporting. Thus it often tells us that something is wrong without stopping us doing it, which is like taking the sugar out of your tea without stopping you drinking it. Conscience, as somebody said, is like a dog that barks at you as you pass without preventing you from passing.

The Victorians made much of conscience, erecting it into a terrible engine of deterrence and remorse. In practice conscience is usually exercised at the expense of other people. In this sense, it is in most of us merely a rationalisation of the impulse to blame. Old people, in particular, are much given to calling sour grapes at pleasures which they can no longer enjoy.

All human qualities, of course, are subject to their particular perversion, and the nobler the quality, the greater the perversion. The examples I have given illustrate perversions of conscience. Properly regarded, conscience is our guide to conduct. If you believe in religion, you can think of it as the voice of God prompting the individual to do what is right, only if it is to be effective – and this is what most of us won't do – he must keep quiet and listen to the promptings.

When we are asked whether conscience makes cowards of us all, the word conscience is being used in an entirely different sense to signify the habit of taking thought. What the phrase means is that if you take thought about an action long enough, wondering whether you ought to do it or not, you usually won't do it. Most

actions are the result of not taking thought. We call them impulsive. For example, singing in your bath, or breaking the furniture when angry. If we were to take thought we presumably should not sing in the bath for fear the household might hear us, or break the furniture because we would have to pay to buy other furniture.

Most action, in other words, is harmful, and if we think enough about it we don't do it.

The Supreme Sin

No, I am not going to give the orthodox Christian answer that the supreme sin is pride. Pride comes before a fall, and pride produced The Fall. In other words, it was the sin of self-centredness, of egotism, whereby the creature thought more of himself than of his Creator, which, so we are told, led to the exclusion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.

When I am trying to assess the seriousness of a sin I think of it not as a thing in itself, but as an action which has effect. I think of it from the point of view of those effects. A good action is, for me, one that causes the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people. A bad action, one that causes the greatest amount of pain to the greatest number of people.

Judged by this standard, I give top marks not to pride, but to cruelty, to the cruelty, first, that strives to make people feel small, and to humiliate them, that seeks to hurt them in their souls out of hatred and uncharitableness; in other words, the cruelty of malice.

Secondly, what seems to me to be worse, the cruelty which takes delight in the infliction of bodily pain. Physical pain, I think, is the greatest evil in the world, worse than spiritual, worse than mental pain. And I would ask anybody who doubts this to let me tie him up naked to a post and jog him at carefully chosen

places, and at nicely calculated intervals, with a red-hot poker. If at the end of five minutes he didn't opt for any amount of mental or spiritual pain in preference to the continuance of the treatment I'd eat my hat and recant.

Now, if you believe, as I do, that physical torture is the worst thing that can happen to a man, then the action which consists in inflicting it for no reason, or, because the torturer delights in it, or for fun, is the worst of human actions; it is, in other words, the greatest of sins.

Leisure, and some ways of spending it

A Four-Hour Working Day?

We are endlessly encouraged to-day with the prospects of the benefits of applied science. Man has found a way of tapping the latent resources of the earth. He has contrived to harness the winds, the waves and the tides; he has substituted the machine for his muscles to such an extent that we are told that it is economically possible to shorten the working day of the whole world by fifty per cent.; so soon, that is to say, as reconstruction is over and the ravages caused by the war have been made good.

Suppose that this were done? Would it, one wonders, be a blessing?

For my part, I think men and women work much too hard, and the curious fact is that they have never worked so hard as they do in the present age when they have invented so many labour-saving devices to do their work for them. Cranes and lifts to do the work of arms; cars to take the place of legs; machines to substitute for hands, and not for one pair of hands but for hundreds; just as men never had so little time to spare as in the present age when they are always trying to save it.

Nevertheless, I am torn two ways about this, because it is no good giving people leisure unless they know how to use it. Most of us don't. We find it easy enough to tolerate the few Bank Holidays or the one fortnight's holiday a year when the mere change from a burdensome routine is felt as a relief, and to lounge upon the sands

is a pleasant novelty. But suppose one went on lounging on the sands. Suppose the novelty extended itself from a fortnight to a couple of months. Suppose, instead of only having the fag end of the day, we had more than half our waking hours to do with as we pleased. How on earth, given our present tastes, should we employ them?

There would, I suppose, be an enormous extension of games, cinema, radio, dirt and dog track racing, football pools, dance halls, amusement fairs, pleasure cruises? Golly, what a prospect! Any man worth his salt would rebel against it before it had gone on for six months, and insist on making life hard, difficult, and dangerous again, as a protest against the need to fill with mass-produced entertainment and commercially provided pleasure these vast tracts of new-won leisure time.

It is no good, then, shortening the working day until you teach people how to make something of their leisure, and that is, perhaps, the greatest single problem which will confront the citizens in the future.

Leisure and How to Spend it

Having said this, I suppose I ought to go one stage further and say how I think we ought to occupy our leisure time. Of course, there is the playing of games. I would like to put it on record that I have never played so many games, and, in particular, so much chess and so much bridge, as I did during the war.

Games are an effective anodyne against grief, a cure for boredom, and a distraction from oneself and in particular from the continual being with oneself and being thrown in upon oneself.

I suppose if one is a really nice chap, being with oneself and thrown in upon oneself doesn't matter, because by hypothesis one is somebody whom it is nice to be with. But not being a nice chap,

I'd like to say that whenever I look within I am afraid of what I see there, and hasten to look outside again as quickly as ever I can. Therefore, the more distractions there are to make one look outside, the better.

Now, of all such distractions reading seems to me to be the most reliable. Firstly, the pleasures of reading are a cumulative investment; the more of it you do, the more you want to do. It is a first-rate investment, therefore, for old age.

Secondly, most of us have received an inadequate education. What an opportunity leisure provides for us to correct and supplement it! I knew, for example, a man who spent 24 hours a day during the war at an A.R.P. post, who decided, like a great many other people, that he was never going back to an office stool after the war. His children had been evacuated into the country, and when he visited them the spell of the countryside was laid on him. "If only," he said to me at the time, "I could have as much, or as little, as an acre of my own to do what I like with, I think I could be happy there, even if I never had a holiday." And so in the preparation and the hope of a rural future, during the periods of waiting he spent a regular four hours a day reading farming literature, mainly literature issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, to equip himself to practice market-gardening at the end of the war.

I have another friend, also in a branch of the Civil Defence Services during the war, who believes in God; believes, too, that the right approach to God, the approach through mysticism, has been lost; believes that the way to recover it is in solitude and meditation, and he, therefore, spent the weary hours of his war-waiting job trying to collect his soul in meditation and to draw nearer to God.

All this sounds a bit formidable. Let me lower the tone and talk about myself. For my part, then, I add that there are certain books that I have put aside to read in my old age when I have a little leisure. The trouble up to now has been that I write so many that I have never had time to read much. But one day, I suppose,

I shall have to read something, and there, waiting for me on the shelf, are Boswell's "Life of Johnson," Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and the New Testament.

Even so, I am afraid the temptation of reading my own books will be too strong for me, since by the time I am 70 I shall passionately want to know what is in them, and I doubt if I shall ever get Boswell, Gibbon, and the rest read at all – at least, not all of them.

But what an opportunity for someone with plenty of leisure, for somebody condemned during the war to a waiting job to do all the reading that I shall never have time for. Mind, I am not talking only of reading as a distraction, as something to pass the time, but of the reading which enlarges the personality, which makes life therefore more interesting, which enables one to see more beauty and more passion, which gives more scope for one's sympathy and understanding in the world than one saw before; which helps one to know something of what great men have said and thought memorably about life.

One Way of Keeping Fit

Games are, of course, as good a way as there is of spending leisure time. Also they keep one fit. But what we sometimes overlook is that keeping fit implies mental as well as physical exercise. The recipes for physical fitness are obvious and well-known; they depend upon your own personal preferences and aptitudes. But mental fitness and well-being are more difficult of achievement.

I suppose the chief thing is an interest and a zest in living, and interest and zest in living means for me, and, I think, for most of us, change, occupation, and change of occupation. And by occupation I mean pre-occupation – that is to say, the being used up to the last ounce of one's capacity in one's work, and then using oneself to the last ounce of one's capacity in one's play.

Some people think that when they have stopped working they ought to relax. There is no relaxation for me! I don't know how to relax. They ought to follow my example and go and do something else as hard as they can. For, I repeat, I don't know how to relax. I can only go to sleep, which is what I do do, insisting, whenever I get the chance, upon half an hour's nap after the mid-day meal. Now if anybody likes to say this is a private peculiarity of mine, and should not be made into a general rule for fitness, I have got two answers. First, the most sensible human beings do the same, in all warm countries, the siesta after the mid-day meal being part of the accepted practice of living. When you wake up again the day takes on a new lease of life. Secondly, there are no universal rules for fitness. The wise man is the man who finds out, as early as possible, what suits him and insists on following it.

I remember my first independent discovery about myself was in this matter of sleep. When I left school, went to a university, and could stay up as long as I liked for the first time in my life, I thought the right and proper thing to do was to stay up as long as I liked. Staying up late vindicated my freedom and confirmed me, as I believed, in manhood. Gradually I discovered that if I stayed up late, I was a wreck next day, miserable, depressed, irritable, and bad-tempered. I found, in fact, that I wanted more sleep than most people.

Another independent discovery made about the same time was in regard to smoking. When I was first allowed to smoke cigarettes I smoked 10, 15, even 20 a day. Presently my tongue was burnt, my throat sore, my lips skinned, and I found I got no pleasure from my cigarette-smoking. Also I was in danger of developing an ever-growing need for what gave me ever-diminishing pleasure. I therefore made a decision. I decided firstly that I didn't want to smoke as much as most people, and secondly, that I didn't like cigarettes. Now I smoke a pipe, five a day at the most, and look forward to and enjoy every one.

Take food. I am greedy and have never been able to resist the temptations of second helpings, even when I know they are bad for me and make me fat and sluggish. Always to fight against temptation at every meal was tiring, and took the fun out of meals. So I discovered that the best thing was to go without one meal (breakfast) altogether, and then let myself "rip" on the others.

These are three examples of finding out things about yourself, discovering the sort of things that suit you and keep you fit. But because they suit you, it doesn't mean they will suit everybody. So the golden rule about keeping fit is that there is no golden rule. Let everybody find out for himself his own particular fitness "cup of tea" and then insist on having it.

Holidays At Home and Away

Although I am away from my home in Hampstead very frequently during the year, I seldom take a holiday, in the sense of "holiday" in which people usually use the word. I lecture in the North of England, and sneak off for a couple of days to the Lake District or the Yorkshire Moors. I contrive to arrange my life so that I can spend at least a day and a night each week in the country. Change of scene is no doubt important, but even more important is change of company. The least refreshing kind of holiday is a holiday spent with people with whom one spends one's working life, with the friends from the office, with the neighbours, or, worst of all, with the wife and kids.

How can one get refreshment of mind, body and spirit if one is always with the same person or persons? How can one's mind be revitalised if one always draws on the same stock of ideas and never hears any new conversation; how can one's spirit be renewed or one's emotions awakened, if one *always* sees the same face on the other side of the breakfast table?

The most invigorating holiday I know is to plunge myself into a group of people whom I have never seen before, at a boarding-house, a camp, on a cruise, or, best of all, at what is called a Summer School – where one can do a bit of work if one wants to, and hear an occasional lecture – and there be left to sink or swim and make friends if I can. After such a holiday one goes back to wife and family fresh and new, cobwebs brushed away, corners rubbed off, mind polished up, and sees with new eyes the commonplace features of one's accustomed life (and wife).

But for these unfortunates who are unable to get away for a change of scene or company, there are still a host of obvious employments for leisure. Gardening, working on the allotment, playing tennis, playing golf (if you can get any balls), going to the cinema, going to the theatre, and all the rest of it. But I add this, that one should make it one's business to master one thing which is both difficult and repaying, i.e., learning music, learning a language, studying philosophy, learning how to cook, learning how to ride a horse, and that one should devote not less than one hour a day, preferably the same hour, to its mastery.

Nothing, I think, is more intolerable than the servitude to the obligation to keep oneself amused for 24 hours out of 24. Nothing is easier than to amuse yourself, when you have been working for an hour at full stretch at something which demands will power and determination before you tackle it. So, apart from the added enrichment to one's life of the acquiring of the new difficult thing, there is the advantage that it makes all the other things so much less boring and so much more enjoyable by contrast.

The Lake District

One of my London hobbies is looking at maps of the Lake District. Why the Lake District rather than the mountains of

North Wales or the North West of Scotland, the reader may ask? Because, to begin with, its mountains were the first I ever knew – I can remember, as if it were yesterday, my first visit as an undergraduate in the late September of 1912 as a member of a reading party. For a week I scarcely noticed the mountains and went on brutishly with my reading. Then one day a Nonconformist minister took me from Borrowdale to the top of Great End, where we were lost in mist, and so to Wastdale for the night. The spell was cast, the magic worked, the mountains entered into my bones, and I have never got them out since.

Secondly, because I have visited them more often than any others. I have been over 50 times to the Lake District. For a number of years I went there annually at Whitsun, to take part in a manhunt – 20 of us used to hunt one another over the mountains, and the hares had to remain uncaught if they could until 5 o'clock.

But this is only to put the question back. Why have I visited them more often? Obviously because they are my favourite mountains. Why my favourite?

First, they are of the right size. In the Alps you have to be careful or you make a fool of yourself, and get into trouble. In the Lakes, unless you are very foolish, you cannot get into trouble; which means that in the Alps you want a guide, and in the Lakes you can wander at will.

Secondly, because of their comparatively small size. You can be up onto the tops and down in a day. Hence variety; on the same day you will see hilltops, fellsides, and valleys. Incidentally, it is in the contrast between the grimness of the mountains and the lovely lushness of the valleys with their green meadows sloping down to the lakes, that one of the chief charms of the Lake District lies.

Thirdly, climate. When you go abroad and get out of your railway train, and see for the first time the blue sky of the Alps or the Pyrenees, pierced by those towering white peaks, you are thrilled and overwhelmed. "How wonderful," you say. And so it is

wonderful. And then as day succeeds day, and never a cloud flecks that flawless blue, you get bored with the monotony of sunlight and fine weather, and long for a change. In the Lake District, the weather changes daily. It is rarely that there is a day without rain – even more rarely, a wholly rainy day.

Fourthly, language. As one who lives by words, I hate not to speak or be spoken to, and being a fool at languages, I tend to shun foreign parts. Of course, there are the Welsh mountains, and very lovely they are, but the mountain Welsh very naturally like to speak Welsh.

Fifthly, the sense of evanescence. Here in the Lake District is something very lovely and precious, whose beauty is the product of a happy mating of Nature with man. It is a fragile beauty, for the Lake District is small, and its valleys easily invaded and spoiled beyond recovery. The hundred and one pests of our time, the motors, the main roads, the buses, the pylons, the villas, the bungalows, have duly invaded them, with the result that in twenty years' time, unless we make the Lake District into a National Park, the loved place will have been destroyed past recall.

And so in London one looks at maps of the Lake District to recall to oneself something which already "was" rather than "is" – which, indeed, in the future will not be at all unless we have the sense to implement the recommendations of the Dower Report and preserve the Lake District as a National Park.

A Trio of Games—Cricket

What is one to say about cricket to-day? That it has not moved with the times and fails to meet the incessant demand for speed and ever more speed? Somebody has just been saying that it is finished as a national sport. What do I think?

First, that whatever happens, cricket won't go out altogether.

Nothing in this country is ever allowed to die. It continues, like the Church, to exist in a moribund condition, but it is never finally turned and quitted.

But, although it will never die, cricket will, I think, become more and more of a museum exhibit. Cricket belongs to a leisurely age in which elderly gentlemen gorged with lunch, repaired to Lord's to watch a game for two played by 22. In this world after the war there will be no more leisurely gentlemen, no more gorgings at luncheons, and there will not be enough leisure either to sit on benches during a long sunny afternoon, or to devote the time of twenty-two men to doing what can perfectly well be done by two of them. I say "sunny afternoon," but, in fact, it usually rains. What an odd race are the English to have invented and brought to its perfection a game which, I suppose, is more unfitted to the English climate than to that of any other European country. I wonder whether we would ever have played cricket so greatly and cared for it so intensely if it hadn't been that rain so often stopped play.

Bridge

Bridge is a device for enabling idle and intelligent people to waste time with a good conscience by deceiving themselves into the belief that they are exercising their minds, and idle and stupid people to exercise their minds without deception. For such minds as they possess really *are* exercised.

Personally I am addicted to Bridge, and play at least once a week. In making this statement I express no opinion as to which of the two classes I assign myself. But at least I hope that I don't deceive myself into thinking that I am doing anything useful. For me, Bridge is a way of passing the time. Broadly speaking, when I am indoors the only occupations I can tolerate are working, reading,

listening to music and playing games. What I can't tolerate is prolonged conversation, whether in the form of discussion—exchanging ideas, I have found, is such a bad bargain—gossip, or anecdotes. Yet I don't like being by myself. At least, I don't when it begins to grow dark. It is all right being by yourself in the morning, tolerable in the afternoon, but terrifying in the evening, because when you are by yourself you are apt to consider yourself.

Now, Bridge is a very good device for making you look outwards. You don't have to think very much—just often enough to keep yourself interested—and you don't have to think about yourself. Hence the value of Bridge, like that of most games, is that it distracts one from oneself, and so keeps the psycho-analyst from the door. Bridge is like fleas on a dog. A certain amount of fleas are good for a dog in that they stop him from brooding over being a dog. Moreover, Bridge ensures that you will be in company without having to talk to your company, or be talked to by them—at least, not very much.

Chess

Now Chess is a different matter. Chess is an art, Chess is a study, Chess is one of the noblest inventions of the human mind. In fact, to explain what I really feel about chess, I must here be permitted to trench for a moment upon the confines of philosophy.

Because of science we have been brought up to think that to be real a thing must be something that you can see or touch, or like what you can see or touch. Now, I would suggest that there are other orders of reality, other worlds, if you like to call them so, containing (I am putting this very crudely) other orders of reality. In one of them, for example, there dwell the things with which mathematicians deal, namely, numbers.

Now chess, like mathematics, deals with combinations, and relations

between things which are not material things – admittedly, of course, one touches and sees the pieces on a chessboard, but it is not of them that one is thinking, but about the combinations that can be made between them – which belong to a different order of reality from the world we can see or touch.

Now, it is a very good principle, incidentally one of Aristotle's, that you can't study a subject to any advantage unless you have practical experience in your own life of the subject matter which you study. That is why children are good at mathematics but hopeless at politics, since politics deals with the management of men; that is why people who are good at chess often have no taste for literature and drama because they have no experience of the passions and emotions with which literature and the drama deal. It is no accident, by the way, that the three spheres in which you get infant prodigies are music, mathematics, and chess, all of them spheres in which we are dealing with an order or level of reality other than that of the world which we can see or touch.

I like to think that one of the reasons for it may be that the soul has inhabited such an order of reality before it was incarnated in the body, and brings with it to this world a memory of the harmonies of sound and combinations of number which exist in that world, a memory which it does not immediately forget. Presently the memory is wiped out by experience of this world, and the chess or mathematical prodigy is a prodigy no longer.

Now a mind like that of Capablanca, or the greatest of all chess geniuses, Morphy, is a mind in which the memory of the combinations of the other world has not faded: but since he is good at chess, but has never perfected himself in the pursuits of, or obtained familiarity with the things belonging to this order of reality, he is no good at business or the professions.

Escapism

For some reason which I have never been able to understand, the word "escapism" has acquired a derogatory flavour. All the ways and means of employing leisure which I have discussed, reading, walking, riding, playing games, all have been dubbed "escapist" by some earnest "realist" at some time or other.

Now to my mind, escapism in itself is neither good nor bad. It all depends upon from what you escape and what you escape to. To escape from the world of to-day – a world of lying and boasting, and killing and hurting, and frightening, and being killed, and being hurt, and being frightened – that surely cannot be a bad thing.

But what about the world you escape to? If it is a drunkard's world, that too is bad, since, drink as you may, you cannot stay there, but sooner or later must return to the world to escape from which you began to drink. For sooner or later the effects of drink wear off and you are left bankrupt of hope and energy, vomiting and headachy, to face precisely the same difficulties as those which led you to drink.

Or you can escape into a world of strong emotion, the world of the novels, for example, of crime, torture, and rape, a world in which we do violence to our emotions in the world of fiction, in order the better to dull and brutalise them for the world of every day. Or you can escape into the sentimentalist's world, a world of soothing syrup and rose-coloured spectacles in which human beings live and move in a sort of treacle pond of emotion in which everybody is so sweet and has the nicest possible feelings; the world, in fact, of the penny novelette. Just as the first world brutalises, the second enfeebles and unfits you to face the world of every day.

Alternatively, you can escape into the world of great literature, a world which in a sense is more real than that in which we live, because the genius of the writer peoples it with characters larger

than life, meeting situations finer and more fruitful than those offered by the affairs of the everyday world. This, I think, is the function of the great writer, and more particularly of the great poet – to strip away the film of familiarity with which daily life is invested, so that one catches for a moment a glimpse of the wonder of existence and the strange and fleeting life of man.

This is an escape to beauty and wonder, and from it one comes back heartened and strengthened to cope with the thousand and one crosses and cares that assail us to-day.

Escapism and the Film

There is a perennial controversy as to which type of picture really represents popular demand. Now that the war is over, do people want to escape from it and its horrible memories as they might do, for example, by seeing farces and light comedies, or do they want to have their memories of the war kept alive by films such as, for example, "Next of Kin," and "One of our Aircraft is Missing?"

It is a silly controversy because the answer is obviously both. Look into your own psychology. You can't help thinking about the war even if you want not to, even if you want to forget it as quickly as possible, and naturally, therefore, anything connected with the war, any representation of the war, in art, literature, or upon the screen, has a compelling fascination. Look at the popularity of the pictures of the war by war artists and Civil Defence artists, which are so continually being shown in London. And then suddenly there comes a reaction and one wants to forget the whole thing, and either listens to the Brains Trust or goes and sees a Disney cartoon.

Both moods, I think, are inevitable, and both require expression and provision. The answer, therefore, is not that we always want funny films, or that we never want funny films, but that there

occurs intermittently in all of us a mood of escapism for which funny films cater, only to be followed by a mood of seriousness, in which we go back to the war, as a man with a sore place likes to scratch it, or with an aching tooth to suck it.

But I would like to add this. The films must be funny.

Humour and the English

And yet I think that as a nation we tend to run our famous sense of humour to death. No contemporary English person would ever willingly admit to a lack of a sense of humour; but this is certainly not true of most people who have ever lived, and it is not even true of English people at times other than our own – of, for example, a twelfth-century baron, a sixteenth-century Puritan, or a nineteenth-century Nonconformist.

The sense of humour is a comparatively modern invention. There is practically no mention of it in the classics. Comedy the Greeks had, laughter and horseplay, but what we call a sense of humour – the Lord only knows what we mean by it – they never mention.

The eighteenth century prided itself on its wit. But wit is a highly intellectual affair; the brain is stimulated to activity, not the mouth to open. Here, for example, is a typical eighteenth-century remark from Lord Chesterfield: "The vulgar often laugh but never smile, whereas well-bred people often smile but seldom laugh. A witty thing never excites laughter. It pleases only the mind, and never distorts the countenance."

As for other peoples, I imagine the Spanish, who are grave and dignified, and the Germans, who are solemn when they are not pompous, and pompous when they are not savage, and who care for music and philosophy rather than humour, would certainly prefer to say that they had no sense of humour rather than that they had no appreciation of art. Indeed, if you put to any *civilised*

human being, for example, an inhabitant of fifth-century B.C. Athens, of fifteenth-century Italy, or of eighteenth-century France, whether they would sooner be without a sense of beauty or a sense of humour, they would think the question meaningless. Of course, they would plump for beauty every time.

Why do the English make so much of the sense of humour? What, first of all, do they mean by it? They mean, I think, something which will enable you to laugh your troubles off, to bear the whips and scorns of fortune with a smile. The Scots, of course, maintain that they have a special brand of humour all their own; but it seems to me wholly derivative from the English. Take the story of the two Scotsmen on the beach at Dunkirk, saying the one to the other: "Well, Jock, the French have been knocked out; if the English get knocked out too, it is a hard job I'm thinking we'll be having," as typical of both of two English characteristics – (1) belittling your troubles, and (2) laughing at them.

Of course, as I have defined it, the sense of humour is an admirable thing. Yet it has its inevitable defects, and one is that it prevents us from taking anything seriously, including ideas. We don't like facing unpleasant truths and excuse ourselves with a jest from facing them. We don't like thinking, and will stand shivering on the brink of the dark river of thought, waiting for somebody to make a joke and relieve us of the necessity of plunging in.

Youth and Age

The High Spirits of Youth

Whenever the Lord Mayor's Show Day or Guy Fawke's Night come round, we hear of outbursts of "ragging" by undergraduates; cars are overturned, windows are broken, unpopular figures are burnt in effigy. And immediately the cry goes up, "Why can undergraduates get away with this disgraceful sort of behaviour?" or "Why do only undergraduates behave like this?"

Well, of course, it's not only undergraduates. Most young men of 18-22 would like to do the same. Indeed, it is natural and proper for them to do the same, ragging being merely an outpouring of animal spirits. Elderly people who condemn this sort of thing forget what it was like to be young. I have forgotten – forgotten, at least, with my feelings.

I simply cannot believe that once, in the middle of the night, I took a humble part in an enterprise designed to affix to the top of the Martyr's Memorial in Oxford what the delicacy of the *Sunday Dispatch* requires me to call "an article of bedroom furniture"; or that, having finished my examinations, I drove round Oxford clad in a rug in a donkey cart with a mock policeman to make a way for me through the traffic – he was summoned afterwards, poor chap, for impersonating the police – and, with my face well rubbed with what I believed to be face powder to make it white and hollow, delivered a speech, also at the Martyr's Memorial, on the iniquity of work. In fact, it was tooth-powder, and, well

rubbed into the cheeks, took the skin off and made me miserable for days afterwards.

But although I have forgotten these things with my feelings, I remember them with my reason, and my reason tells me that similar goings on ought to be made possible for everybody, which means that all young men ought to have a chance of education and the leisure that education brings until they are 22, before industry, marriage, and the world gets hold of them, and, further, that there ought to be special towns set apart for them – little country towns like Oxford and Cambridge used to be, where they could enjoy their high jinks without too much interference from respectable citizens.

Juvenile Crime

But youthful high jinks are one thing; crime another. One to be expected, the other deplored. And juvenile crime is on the increase for reasons which ought to be obvious to everyone.

What can you expect? Here we are living in an age of violence in which millions are trained in the arts of slaughter and destruction, and are taught to believe that their highest is to take the life of other human beings whom they have never seen; taught, in other words, that their patriotic duty requires them to forget all those precepts of gentleness and mercy upon which their religion is founded, and to throw aside the standards of civilisation, which over the painful centuries have been so slowly built up.

Such is the atmosphere in which we adults spend our lives. How can we expect it not to affect our juniors, especially when they are deprived of parental control by the absence of their fathers, especially when there is no elder brother to put them in their place and to prevent them from getting too big for their boots, and especially when elderly magistrates, caught up in the same devil's

web of violence, prescribe flogging as a treatment for delinquency, and so perpetuate the disease which they are supposed to cure? I don't, then, see a remedy so long as war persists. I agree, of course, that the war had to persist until we had beaten the Nazis – one shuddered to think of the fate of youth in Nazi-governed countries, or in this country if the Nazis had won the war – and I deduced, then, only one further reason, if a further reason were required, for beating the Nazis at the earliest possible moment.

But there was more to it than finishing and winning the war. What about peace time? One is struck here by a curious anomaly. From the ages of five to 14, and at the end of the war, as we are promised, up to 15, the State assumes responsibility for the training and education of its children. We are bound, I suppose, to continue conscription after the war – I don't see how we are to avoid the policing of Europe – and that means that from 18 to 20 the State will again assume control of the lives of its young people. But from 14 or 15 to 18 there is a gap in which they are left to fend for themselves. With what logic does the State aspire to control its younger citizens from five to 14, and again from 18 to 20, but to leave them to their own devices, to rot in blind-alley employment, or in none, or to be led astray by every kind of evil influence from 15 to 18.

Without presuming to enter the current controversy about education after the war, I would like to make one suggestion, and that is that for two or three years, during what one might call the gangster or Boy Scout period, when young chaps – I know precious little about girls at that age and so don't venture to speak of them – like to form gangs for the purpose of joint adventure and depredation, they should be sent to camp boarding schools where they will be maintained by the State; learn fitness of body and alertness of mind, some technical skill, and the elements of citizenship, preferably in lovely wild surroundings – what about the Galloway Hills, for example, the Highlands, or the wilder Yorkshire dales – where they can enjoy the pleasures of comradeship, learn pre-military

training – and by pre-military I mean to learn to ride, to swim, to walk, to run, to endure, to spend a night and make a fire in the open; to go, in other words, through all those ardours and endurances which any young man worth his salt enjoys; learn, in fact, everything except military drill and the use of the rifle – and so be kept out of the mischief of the cities and that life of the streets, which is never more unnatural than it is to young people between the ages of 15 and 18. There are going to be lots of aerodromes, barracks, camps, work-shops left derelict after the war, and I suggest they be used for these purposes.

It is in such positive training, and not in periods of detention, and still less in sentences of flogging by magistrates out of touch with modern psychology, that the proper cure – no, not “cure,” “prevention” – of juvenile crime is to be found.

Strength and a Long Life

How is it, I am asked, that so often strong men die young, while the frail are long lived?

Most strong men that I know are athletes and boxers. When young, they win the plaudits of the crowd and hit the headlines. In middle age the qualities which won for them their reputation fade, but the taste for it remains.

Admiration is like a drug. Once you have had it, it is extremely difficult to do without it. The same is true of the beautiful woman, and supplies the answer to the question which one is so often tempted to ask: Why do athletes, boxers, and actresses continually stage “come-backs” when they are so obviously past their job? They do so because they become bored and wretched when they are denied public admiration.

Athletes in particular tend to go to fat, when the days of endurance and exertion are over. Psychological boredom, physical

fatness and flabbiness, tend to produce a gradual declension of vital energy, and the adipose athlete subsides into an early grave.

As to the physically frail, the very fact that they *are* frail often prevents them from engaging in the ordinary activities of young people. They read, learn, study, cultivate the intellect, and refine the spirit. These are investments which pay ever larger dividends every year one lives. Consequently, even when they are old, they tend to find life more interesting. But I would not have it thought that all frail people are therefore spiritual! I know many who devote all their energies to keeping themselves alive. Not unnaturally they succeed.

More Money for Youth?

In our present social and economic system young men are, I suppose, underpaid, and old men overpaid. Should the system be changed, and young men be paid more?

On the whole, I think not. Not because young men are less valuable than old men, or that their pleasure is less important, but because they want less to give them pleasure.

Young men don't want much money since their's is the enjoyment of the things that money can't buy. I would like to put it on record that when I was young practically none of the good things of life which I then enjoyed involved the outlay of any appreciable sum of money.

Music? But I could stand in the Prom at the Queen's Hall for 2s. Books? There were the *World's Classics* and *Everymans* at a shilling, and presently the *Penguins* at sixpence. When I went into the country I could stay at Youth Hostels and didn't mind the beds being small and hard, nor did I feel them to be cold as they seem to me now.

I travelled third and was quite prepared to face the indignity of

being found travelling without a ticket. I didn't have to keep up appearances and so could wear old clothes.

Games? Well, I had to buy my share of tennis balls, but that didn't come to much. The country? "A green thought in a green shade costs nothing," and mountain climbing involved only the wear and tear of one's boots.

The theatre? I could perfectly well go into the gallery because I could hear anything. The cinema? My vision was so good that I didn't mind the front seats. Housekeeping? I was in love and newly married and the excitement of setting up house for the first time is much too intoxicating to be upset by the incidental hardships of poverty. In fact, the hardships were part of the fun of the thing. Love? I've never, thank heaven, had to pay for that.

Now, look at the old man. The excitement which comes from the newness of being grown up and the thrill of falling in love for the first time have faded through use and wont. What can he do, poor chap, but gratify his appetites and indulge his tastes? And, with cultivation, his appetites have got larger and his tastes more exacting.

He wants good food and good drink; he wants a front seat at the theatre since he is deaf. Moreover, he has acquired a certain amount of dignity and grown used to consideration.

Now, for all these things he must pay. Broadly speaking, the difference between youth and age is that the pleasures of youth cost nothing, whereas the pleasures of age must be paid for, which, no doubt, is why old men set such store by money.

Let not those of us who are young blame the old for their grossness and pompousness. Throwing your weight about and over-eating when you are old is one of the compensations – a poor one, I grant you – for the loss of the pleasures that come unsought when you are young.

But, if you substitute power for money I think the answer is different. I have often thought that the mistake of the young is

not that they let the old have the money, but that they let them have the power.

If the world were governed entirely by people under 35 and men over 40 were rigidly excluded from positions of importance on pain of the lethal chamber if they insisted, I am inclined to think that the world would be a better place.

Age and Occupation

It is, I am told, one of the odd results of the war that many middle-aged and elderly people found new companionships and interests in the many jobs which could be done voluntarily in their leisure time, for example, in the Home Guard or in Civil Defence work. Can they avoid relapsing into their former dull groove? If so, how?

I don't know. It has happened before, this relapsing into grooves, and it will happen again. For there is nothing special about this war which will make what happened last time impossible this time.

It is one of the tragedies of humanity that just as the only thing that can unite people is the one thing they all know to be wrong – war, so the one thing that can take them out of themselves and enable them to rise above themselves is the same appalling legacy, from man's past, this same expression of his animal nature – war.

Most people of my age live in grooves, along which they go on moving until they end in graves. Short of sending middle-aged people back to college or causing them compulsorily to attend classes, or short of life catching them up by the scruff of the neck and pitchforking them into falling in love again, I don't know what can be done for them.

When I was young, I advocated a painless lethal chamber for everybody over 40. Now I am inclined to put the lethal chamber age rather later. Besides, since I was young, there have arisen the

generation of young Nazis, who are much worse in respect of the article of humanity than any monstrosity that old people have contrived or could contrive.

Age and Ability

There is no real age-limit to effectiveness. Shaw at 90 is as able and alert as he ever was. Winston Churchill, who celebrated his 70th birthday during the war, did the biggest job of his career, not because he was 70 or because he was not 70, but because circumstances gave him the biggest chance of his career. If you try to assess the effectiveness of old men, you have to ask, effective for what? The best things on the subject of age have been said by Bacon and I suggest that readers look at Bacon's Essays. Here is a quotation :

"Young men are fitter to invent than to judge, fitter for execution than for counsel, and fitter for new projects than for settled business; for the experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it, directeth them; but in new things abuseth them. The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount but to this, that more might have been done, or sooner."

And listen to this :

"Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success." Also, I would add, they talk too much. How they talk !

So much for the conduct of business and affairs. But in other matters, in the world of what I take to be *real* achievement, the world of thought and art, it is almost impossible to draw up rules as between young and old. Take music. Mendelssohn had done all his best work by the time he was 17, the year of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" music. In a sense he lived on his musical capital

ever afterwards. Or philosophy. If Hume, the greatest of English philosophers had died at the age of 26, all his original work would have been done.

On the other hand, Verdi, the Italian musician, grew greater as he got older. The operas which he wrote as a middle-aged man, for example, "Rigoletto" and "Aida," were tuneful but musically unimportant compared with "Othello," composed at the age of 74, and "Falstaff" at the age of 80. Look at Shaw. He began to write plays just before he was 40 (the first, "Widower's House," appeared when he was 36), he writes "Man and Superman" when he is 47, "Pygmalion" at 56, and "St. Joan," which many think his greatest play, at 68.

Music and philosophy are the fields in which the powers of the really great man seem to ripen and to grow with age. But, as I said, there are no rules.

Retirement

It follows, of course, that it is absurd of us to expect the old to retire because they are old. The doctrine of retirement is based upon the false supposition that work is one thing and leisure or holidays another, and that when one's life's work is done, one may begin to enjoy one's leisure.

But if retire you must, then take care to do it gradually. People don't seem to realise the enormous wrench which the cessation of seven or eight hours a day hard labour in office or factory entails. They don't seem to realise that now at last one has to begin to tackle the business of living in earnest, and that one should go into training for it in advance. You see, most of us know nothing whatever about the art of life.

Why should we? We spend four-fifths of our waking hours getting the means to make life possible.

We have so little time left in which to live that most of us are shocking bunglers in the art of life, through sheer lack of practice. To the art of life we bring tired brains and jaded energies, and the fag ends of days, devoted to the job of getting the means to make life possible. Hence, with the whole of life placed at our disposal by retirement, we want practice before we can rise to its challenge.

How can you expect to enjoy leisure if you have never had any practice in the art? And what an object lesson in failure is presented by the retired persons! We see the business man who has spent his life making a pile, retiring at the age of 60 or 65 to enjoy his gains and being so unable to tolerate the unaccustomed tracts of leisure with which he is embarrassed, that he has to take to some arduous and dangerous pursuit like mountain climbing or desert exploring in which he can only induce other people to accompany him by bribing them with large sums of money. Finally he returns to his desk to make money he does not want, in despair of finding life tolerable without the hard labour to which he has been accustomed. Or else he plays golf or tennis, for which he is too old, thinking that the good life consists in whacking little round bits of matter about with long, thin ones in the shape of cues, sticks, mallets, bats, clubs or rackets. Or he drinks cocktails on the Riviera, or makes unconvinced and unconvincing love, or tries some other method of being young again. Or he goes and shoots something. What a comment on his knowledge of the art of living!

Work is, in my view, the only occupation that human beings can stand in any but the smallest human doses, and if you have been working all your life it is silly to suppose that you can suddenly abandon work. For normally the energy and zest of living of the old does *not* fail. I think it was Oliver Wendell Holmes who, at the age of 80, walking along Piccadilly and turning round to look at a stunningly pretty girl, exclaimed with regret: "Oh, to be 70 again."

In fact, of course, most of us enjoy our lives more as we get older, and in spite of the fact that we get older. "I hate getting old," says Samuel Butler somewhere, "but it is the only way I have yet discovered of living a long life." I don't even hate it. For one thing, we get to know what we like. Not so easy, this. For another thing, we have grown to like what we get—much easier. For a third, we lose many of the enmities and rivalries with which we were harassed when young. "At every stage," says Emerson somewhere, "we lose a foe. Few of us," he adds, "envy the consideration enjoyed by the oldest inhabitant."

But two things are necessary for successfully growing old. First, that we should have a little money and have learnt to assume a little dignity; otherwise we have nothing with which to keep the young at their distance. Secondly, that we don't retire in the sense of giving up working, but go on using ourselves up to the last ounce of energy that life has left to us. There is only one ideal place to retire to—the coffin.

I can imagine no worse failure in life than to have reached the age of retirement of, say, 60 or 65, and to know so little about the art of living that you cannot get through 15 or 16 hours out of 24 without being a bore to yourself and a nuisance to your friends.

On Going Slow

Ought the ageing man to begin to go slow after a certain age? I dare say he ought to, but I think he would be a poor fish if he did what he ought to. No doubt if one only had a drink when one ought, and went to bed when one ought, and smoked no more than one ought, one would live a very long life indeed. But length of life is not the only purpose in living.

A Frenchman of my age once went with certain disquieting symptoms to his doctor, and asked him what he ought to do if he wanted

to preserve himself. "Oh, that is quite simple," said the doctor. "Don't drink, don't smoke, go to bed early, and keep off women, and you will live to be a hundred – at least it will seem like it." For my part I would much sooner die early in the full possession of my faculties and in the full indulgence of my appetite.

On Growing Old

So much having been said in its praise, what are the drawbacks to growing old?

That so many of the distractions, the entertainments, the delights of one's youth begin first to pale and then to grow inaccessible. The playing of games, the making of love, go on, but with diminished zest.

The spirit of man has contracted a most humiliating connection – its connection with the body – and as the body fails, it tends to drag down the spirit with it. The mind of man, which has voyaged through the spheres, planned Utopias, unlocked the riddles of the universe, tapped the hidden forces of nature, finds its horizon contract and contract, until it is fined down to a pin-point of concentration upon the solicitations of a bladder, a prostate, or even an aching tooth.

Again, in the West, where we are all busy making money, killing one another, or downing competitors, old people are not held in honour except they be politicians.

Again, the old seem to me to feel things less deeply, or rather less continuously. Their mind – or it is their heart? – jumps like a grasshopper from one thing to another. You go to an old man sitting at his tea-table and tell him that his life-long friend has just died. "What, Jones dead?" he says. "What a dreadful thing!" And then, without any pause of transition, "You know I don't like two lumps of sugar in my tea."

Of course, there are compensating advantages. As passion dies and emotion weakens, intellect sometimes clears. "Not till the fire is dying in the grate," said Meredith, "look we for any kinship with the stars." In other words, the old man can contemplate the true and the beautiful undistracted by passion and desire, and his spirit may draw close to God. Again there may be, if you're lucky, a keener cultivation of the tastes of the spirit. I get more pleasure out of music, more from nature, than I did when the blood ran hotter and faster.

The Prolongation of Life

I've been asked whether I'd like to have a longer lease of life, like the people in Shaw's play, "Back to Methuselah." It all depends on the conditions upon which a longer life was granted to me.

Supposing, for example, I were to become an ape. You see, there are some grounds for thinking that human beings are undeveloped apes. For example, the embryo of the anthropoid apes is at one stage of its development much more human than it subsequently becomes. In other words, after being a human embryo it goes on to become ape-like. Hence the suggestion that men are only apes whose development has been arrested, and that if we went on living long enough – you will find the idea worked out in Aldous Huxley's novel "After Many A Summer" – we should gradually catch up with the apes and become like unto them. Is the idea fantastic? Perhaps, yet it is true that our bodies get more ape-like as we get older. At least they do, if we are males. The human hair on our head gets sparser and silkier; and we begin to sprout hair from our nostrils and ears, and grow it all down the backs of our necks and our backs – in fact, just like the apes.

And that leads to another point. What is the condition of my ageing body to be? When one is young, one's body is beautiful;

as one gets older one's joints creak, the body dries up, and presently breaks down. And as it breaks down, it drags down the mind and the spirit with it. When one is dead it rots away.

When you are a young man you create poetry, fall in love, and see visions; your mind overleaps the horizons of thought and probes the infinite. As you get older your spirit contracts the area of its concern until, as an old man, the sphere of your interests has become limited to the aching limbs or focussed upon the throbbing cancer. And then presently there is no more poetry, but only pain, sickness, and stupor. So if I am to live longer, I must be guaranteed that my body does not grow old.

But suppose that all these ills of the failing body are held off, then, of course, I would like a longer life. It is only when you get to the age of 50 that you get a little wisdom and a little knowledge of how to live. You learn how to deal with people; how not to waste your energies upon things which are unimportant.

Above all, you learn what are the things you really like; what, if I might so put it, is your cup of tea.

On Living One's Life Over Again

If some magician came along to you, and offered you the opportunity of living your life over again, would you accept? Would I?

I think there is a latent catch in this question. If I am to live my life over again, I being just the sort of chap I was when I first began to live it, ignorant, innocent, eager, and given to making mistakes, the answer is, I suppose, No. But then the man who makes that answer is not the man who lived that life and made those mistakes, but a different man, namely, the man that I am now, who is being asked and is answering the question.

If the question is, would I like to go through it all over again, being the man I now am with such small store of knowledge and

experience as I have managed to collect, then the answer might be, Yes; but then it would not be the me who lived that life, but a different me, namely the me who is the man I am now. And the man I am now would, of course, live it differently. I should not make such a fool of myself over women; I should not drink more than was good for me; I should not put people's backs up so often through lack of tact; I should not, let us hope, nourish those old grievances and pursue those old feuds. But putting aside these subtleties, I think my answer to the question is still No.

I think of an individual human being as a sort of tool created by life for the furtherance of its purposes. After 50 or 60 years the tool begins to get blunted. It does not much want to go on being used, precisely because it would not be serviceable if it were. I don't think this should occasion regret; it is only unsatisfied desires and unused energies which make men crave another chance to use them better.

But there is one other thing. It always seems to me a tragedy – I have got the idea from Shaw – that just when we have garnered a little wisdom, when we are emancipated from the strongest gusts of passion and have begun to achieve some mastery over our emotions; when, moreover, we have begun to find out what are the things we really like doing and the things we can really do effectively – and it takes a jolly long while to find out what you really do like and what you don't – that just at that time when we could begin to make something of our lives, we begin to decay. If only our bodies did not begin to break up, if only we could hold off bodily decay a little longer, what a good job we could make of our lives – possibly, too, of the world?

Some Personal Prejudices

The English Pub

I am no supporter of the English pub, not because I object to drink – I like it – but because I object to drinking regarded as an end in itself, to the kind of solitary drinking that men do, standing perpendicularly beside or leaning against a bar-counter, without food and without families.

A lot of romantic nonsense has been and still is spoken and written about English pubs, especially by middle-class young men, who go there expecting to observe what they fondly believe to be life, young women who go to drink gins and limes in the belief that they are being dashing and pretend to like beer in order to curry favour with the men, and late followers of Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who think that the pub is the last representative of “Merrie England” with its yeomen, peasants, farm labourers, and all that.

But what gloomy horrors these places really are. Most of them little citadels of snobbery with their public bars, private bars, saloon bars, and lounges, designed to introduce and perpetuate the maximum degree of snobbish inequality among their patrons. And why are there no women, or at least so few? This segregation of the sexes for drinking purposes is barbarous and uncivilised. On the one hand you have solid, savage drinking by solitary males, or, alternatively competitive drinking by gregarious and hilarious males, terrified at the fear of not being thought good fellows in spending more than they can afford and drinking far more than is good for

them, usually at the expense of the family budget.— they having all the fun and the wife at home having to do all the scraping that the fun costs. On the other hand, you have lonely segregated women driven to some wretched little café or tea-shop to subsist meagrely on glasses of watered milk, a bun and a possible sardine. Why can't they eat and drink together?

I suppose that the system is a survival of the view that there is something wicked in drinking, and I am confirmed in this belief by the fact that the segregated drinking system survives in its greatest glory in the most backward parts of the land—in the country rather than in the town; in the north rather than in the south; among the old rather than among the young; and among what are called the working classes, who have been least affected by emancipating movements of the 20th century.

From the belief that there is something inherently wicked in drinking there arises that very wickedness whose existence the belief asserts. Men drinking gloomily by themselves drink too much in order that they may forget their boredom and lighten their gloom. In other words, they get tight.

The only way to put an end to this is to substitute the café for the pub, to turn the pub into a place of all-round relaxation and pleasure at which you could enjoy a decent meal as well as a drink, to which the wife could and would go as well as the children, and at which you could sit with a glass of beer or a cup of coffee for a whole evening as you can do on the Continent, without being subjected to black looks on the part of the management.

I'd have these places light and gay and well ventilated, with tables on the pavements in the summer and a small orchestra (not, mark you, a radio set) playing at the back, and possibly a cinema show. They would be places to which men would be pleased and proud to take their wives, and they would put an end to the horrible system under which men are spending too much money in company

in the pub while lonely women are spending no money at all in solitude in the home.

It is a savage habit which leads men to drink by themselves. But it is worse than savage; it is criminal to leave women alone in the house while the men are drinking away the money which should go to feed them and the children.

The English and the Americans are, I imagine, the only peoples who dislike their families so much that they insist on taking their more festive pleasures apart. How different is the Continental café, where men and women meet, sit down to their food and drink, and listen to music and watch the world go by.

Anything which can be done to humanise our pubs is a step, therefore, in the right direction. More power, then say I, to the elbow of those enterprising brewers who have arranged for concerts of classical music to be given in public houses. But why should it stop at music? Now let them go on to provide the tables, the meals, and the accommodation for women. And what about a garden, and a bowling green, and a skittle alley?

Then you would get rid of the licensing restrictions and the permitted hours, which make us the laughing stock of the Continent – and have cafés open at *all* hours. After all this, I want some marks, please, for once from the women.

To Treat or Not To Treat?

One of the customs and traditions of the English public house which I think particularly disastrous is the standing of rounds of drinks. Let us suppose that I want a drink, *one* drink, and that I can only reasonably afford one drink – a condition which is common to many of us.

But let us also suppose that being a social or gregarious chap, I decide to have my drink in company with three friends. What

happens? Each of them stands me a drink and I stand each of them a drink. Apart from the pleasure of their company, which may or may not be enjoyable, what are the drawbacks? There are, I think, at least four.

In the first place, I have spent more than I can afford, and – what is more to the point – more than my wife at home, who presumably has a joint budget with me, can afford.

Secondly, I drink more than I want, and, conceivably, more than is good for me.

Thirdly, I am encouraged to be a coward, a coward in the present connection being one who dare not face the odium of being thought mean. And, because I *am* a coward, I pay for more than I want and more than I can afford, and my wife suffers.

If I am strong-minded and drink no more than I can afford, my friends look down their noses at me and, not being brave enough to face the disapproval in their glances, I “stand a round.” So I am turned into a spendthrift not because I am naturally disolute, but because I have not got the courage to incur “loss of face.”

Fourthly and finally, if I *am* strong-minded I have to deprive myself of the company of my friends, which I might otherwise have greatly enjoyed, simply because to go with them means four drinks instead of one.

Nevertheless, I am not in favour of any proposed “No Treating” Order. I don’t, that is to say, think that people should be forced by the State into the prudence they are unable to acquire for themselves.

Such an Order would, to begin with, be an unwarrantable interference with the freedom and rights of the individual. On what grounds could it be defended? On the grounds that there is not enough drink to go round? If that be true – and God forbid – then I should have thought that the best and fairest method would be to close the pub during certain hours.

That people drink more than they ought? I don’t believe a word

of it. In normal times, perhaps, but never less than now (1946). For one thing, the liquor is too weak and too dear for most people to be able to afford to get drunk even if they wanted to – parenthetically, I notice that the convictions for drunkenness are, in fact, astonishingly low – but even if occasionally they do, what of it? Success in life consists in knowing where to stop, *and then going a bit farther*. And who am I – who, indeed, is anybody – to deny people the pleasure of occasionally going the little bit farther?

Is it, perhaps, that generosity has grown to be a cause of reproach? Is it *this* that is objected to by those who never call a pleasure a pleasure if they can call it a sin? Is it, perhaps, that drinking may be bad for the young? I dare say it may be. But is the slight gain which might arise from the prevention of drinking in an occasional unrepresentative minor worthy to weigh in the scale against the damming-up of the waters of generosity and good fellowship? I suppose that, if the non-treating of minors is to be taken seriously, we shall have to forbid anybody who looks under 15 to be served with drink. But, then, are you, I wonder, to make the receipt of a drink dependent upon the production of a birth certificate? Obviously not, so let us say no drink for obvious “kids” and leave it to the good sense of the publican.

What really weighs with me is that, one way or another, we have all had, and are still having, a pretty awful time, and there is no reason to make it more awful than it need be by cutting off a source of innocent pleasure and good fellowship merely because, like all pleasures, drinking brings certain inevitable dangers in its train. The way to overcome temptation is not to remove its occasion – that is the way of weakness – but to trust to people’s good sense not to turn an instrument of enjoyment into an occasion of stumbling. That is the way of strength.

Is all this illogical and inconsistent with what I have said above? Well, then, it is illogical and inconsistent. But the sum of it is: (a) I am all for drinking; (b) I am all against too much drinking; (c)

I'm against the English pub where men drink without eating and drink without women and drink without charm; (d) I'm in favour of standing other people drinks, but not of being compelled to stand them either by one's own moral cowardice, because you dare not be thought mean, or by order of the State; (e) I think that a special degree of fun and relaxation is due to us just at present. We have had and are having a hard time, and there is no harm in letting ourselves go a bit.

To Drink or Not To Drink?

I am asked whether it is my experience that men who drink moderately are better equipped to deal with their fellows, socially, professionally, and in business life, than teetotallers.

I suppose the question really refers to that formidable monster, the mere idea of which goes to the heads of those who never partake of it, whose label is "intoxicating liquor."

If I am to treat the question seriously, I reply that of course it all depends upon the job. If the job is to lead men, if it is a job requiring courage and enthusiasm, or a certain temporary flare-up of the spirit, a little drink won't do us any harm. If it is a job requiring keenness of wits and intelligence, a cold brain and cool judgment, with all one's faculties at cutting edge, then – and here, perhaps, I speak only for myself, because I have got a weak head and get both muddled and exuberantly volatile over even a single glass – then, I suppose it had better be coffee and not even the humble glass of beer. In general, drink seems to me to make nice people nicer and disagreeable people slightly more disagreeable than they were before.

Tipping

I hate tipping, and it was always a relief when I went to the Continent to find myself relieved of the necessity by the 10 per cent. service charge on my bill.

It annoys me, firstly, that the hotel or restaurant should expect me to pay its waiters for it; secondly, that the willingness of a man's service should depend upon his calculation of the amount of my tip; and thirdly, that he should be tempted to fawn before he gets it, and then be insolent afterwards if he does not get as much as he thinks he ought to. All this demoralises him and demoralises me. With what dignified scorn have I seen Russian porters refuse tips offered by British and American tourists. Paid by the State, why should they go cap in hand to another man who is no better than they are?

Gambling

I can't see anything wrong with anyone having an "innocent flutter" now and then. One's attitude on this question depends upon what you think we are here for: to air our moral prejudices, or perhaps occasionally to have a bit of fun?

After all, there is not much fun going round at the moment – most of us are having a pretty awful time – and I don't see why sour-faced Puritans should look down their noses at us because some of us enjoy a little mild excitement in backing our fancies, perhaps making a little, more likely losing a little, but at any rate taking our minds off the world and being enabled to let up, if only for an hour, on our troubles.

Of course, a man can endanger his livelihood, happiness, and that of his wife and children, through excessive gambling. But what of it? Excessive anything leads to disaster. If, as I said above, success

in life consists of knowing where to stop, and then going a little bit farther, success in "fluttering" consists in knowing where to stop, and then putting a bit more on.

But let me approach the question a little more seriously. On the whole, I repeat, I am in favour of betting, subject to two conditions. One is that there is no damned nonsense about skill mixed up with and interfering with the pure play of chance – the other that it doesn't waste too much time.

The two conditions tend to operate against betting on race-courses and also against football pools. Because the element of skill – in the shape of knowledge of the past form of horses and of the past performances of football teams – is possible in both, people waste oceans of time over both, poring interminably over racing sheets and bookies' circulars and over the records of football teams, thus acquiring a large amount of useless and unedifying knowledge and turning themselves into conversational bores – how they will insist on unloading their knowledge on people like me who don't want it, and discussing the prospects of horses and teams with people like me who have no interest in either! Games such as roulette are comparatively free from these disabilities. You can waste an hour or so, but unless you are a born debauchee, not much more, at the roulette table, and, although you may pride yourself on your infallible "system," every sensible man knows in his heart that all the systems are eyewash. If they weren't, it wouldn't pay anybody to run a roulette table.

While roulette is comparatively, lotteries seem to me to be absolutely free from these disabilities. They waste nobody's time except that of the promoters, which they occupy rather than waste, and nobody can plume himself on his skill and wisdom in drawing a winning number. Moreover, they appeal to the small gambling instinct that there is in almost all of us, which, as Aristotle said of the possession of private property, is a source of harmless pleasure.

Lotteries in which Savings Certificates were the prizes would, I

think, subject to the conditions laid down for private lotteries, lead to a real increase in Savings. But isn't there a danger that people who had won prizes would incontinently rush to cash their Savings Certificates, thereby defeating the purpose of the scheme? Wouldn't it be necessary, therefore, to attach a condition to the effect that no Savings Certificates obtained as the result of drawing a prize in a lottery could be cashed, say, for three years?

Why not, then, get the Post Office to co-operate by printing a set of certificates of a special colour to be used only as prizes in lotteries which could not be cashed for three years?

Prejudice Against Shaving

Why do men wear beards? This, to me, is an extremely personal question, and I propose to begin with a personal answer to it. For 16 years I worked in the Civil Service, miserable, bored, and always in and out of hot water. I swore an oath, "If ever I have the good fortune to escape from this place in which I am doomed to give to the world the answers it expects, I will signalise my freedom by giving to the world an appearance it does not expect, that is to say, by growing a beard!"

The day came. The vow was fulfilled. The first fortnight was sheer hell. The soft and tender skin of the chin, abraded by 20 years' scouring and scraping, supported with protest and difficulty this new and burdensome growth of hair. Chemists were applied to, ointments and emollients obtained, but once the fortnight was over, there has never been a moment of regret.

Let us enumerate some of the advantages. First, ten minutes extra in bed every morning. Then, in my case, shaving was purgatory; the skin was thin, the beard thick, the hand clumsy. Morning after morning, I maimed and wounded myself, and embarked upon the day irritable, bleeding, and ill-tempered.

Next, consider the extra paraphernalia of living that shaving entails. The razor, together with its attendant apparatus of shaving brush, shaving soap and cream and ointments and lotions to put upon the abraded skin after the miserable process of shaving is completed. As one who travelled much, I was always being incommoded by my forgetting to remember them all. And what a nuisance when one did forget them. Now there is nothing to carry, no need to remember and no nuisance if one forgets.

God meant those of us who are males to grow hair upon our chins, and I have never understood why (unless it be in pride of science and for profit of commerce) we should put ourselves to so much trouble and inconvenience to thwart His obvious intentions. I grew my beard and faced the world, hardening myself against the inevitable reputation of crank and eccentric which the beard won for me.

One further point, "Young women," I was told, "will look at you in horror, if you allow your chin to be covered with an unsightly and intimidating growth of hair." I am glad to be able to report that the warning was baseless, the belief an illusion. Women are less artificial than men; their instincts are more directly rooted in nature, and they have a feeling which prevails over all artificialities and conventions for what is natural. Now the beard is natural. I suppose that 99 males out of every 100 who ever lived have been bearded. Let the reader draw his own deductions!

And Against Undue Washing

I would like to put it 'on record that the one piece of wartime rationing that I really welcomed was the rationing of soap. The absurd standard of cleanliness set up by the 'upper, the middle and the lower middle classes of this country – I exempt the lower classes from the anathema – has always seemed to me an outrage upon good

sense and a standing monument to a lack of reasonable occupation.

Englishwomen, in particular, are for ever in and out of their baths, for ever scraping and scouring their skins, thus depriving them of their natural oils and juices, which they presently have to put back, as best they can, by synthetic creams as a preliminary to wondering why they catch colds. Englishwomen are very "nice" in the matter of smells, and look down their noses at the Middle Ages because they had no drains; but they are totally indifferent to assaults upon the sense of hearing.

Soap deferred maketh the dirt thick but squealing and squawking the shouting and crooning and jazzing and "revving up" make the head ache until the wits are addled. It is no accident that in the decadence of Rome men and women were always in their baths, or just out of their baths, or conversing by the side of their baths, or comparing the merits of different soaps for use in their baths.

But a Liking for More Pockets

Have we all become slaves to our pockets? If the question means have we all become dependent upon them, then obviously the answer is, Yes, of course, for we are dependent upon our pockets. Speaking for myself, I never have anything like enough of them. It seems to me that as civilisation grows more complicated, it increases the paraphernalia necessary for the conduct of life, so that in order to escape disaster one must go about the world weighted with a vast accumulation of objects.

Historians in the future may well note with pitying amusement, the enormous variety of articles which a twentieth-century townsman has to carry about with him if he is to survive. For example, most of us are half blind and cannot see without spectacles. Spectacles, therefore, and spectacle cases! We have generated a need for

tobacco, and cannot bear ourselves for more than an hour at a stretch without putting between our lips small paper cylinders of tobacco or a piece of tree more or less permanently sprouting out of the corner of our mouth. Cigarettes, therefore, must be carried, and a cigarette case, or, alternatively, pipes and a tobacco pouch, also matches or a lighter to light them with.

Again, most of us who are females are so ashamed of our faces that we daren't exhibit them to the public gaze unless we have covered them up with an artificial surface. Lipstick, therefore, for our lips, powder for our faces, and puffs and tubes to carry them in, as well as mirrors in which, in public, to contemplate the result.

So complicated are our lives, so numerous our engagements, that they overburden our memory and must be committed to diaries. A pocket-book, therefore, a pencil, and, if you are like me and constantly breaking it, a knife to sharpen it with. Then we live by a time-table, having to be at certain places at certain times, and must carry watches; while those of us who live in the country are well advised to carry bus time-tables as well. Then we must have wallets to carry our bank-notes, our identity cards, our ration cards, our season tickets, our theatre tickets, our tickets for this, that, and the other, and all the other tokens of our identity, not to speak of our claims for food, for clothing, receipts, and God knows what. All these things and more are necessary to oil the wheels of our lives, and, for my part, I can never find enough pockets to put them in.

Yet there are certain pockets that I don't use. My tailor gives me four pockets in my waistcoat, where two are enough, and there is a little pocket coyly ensconced above my right buttock which I cannot reach; even if I could, the things I should put into it would make it uncomfortable for me to sit down.

Smoking

I could, of course, leave out my pipe and tobacco and matches. But why should I? I smoke like any sensible person in order to obtain pleasure. But having been brought up on Greek philosophy I have been schooled in the doctrine of the Mean (which means nothing too much), and have always, after the first excitement of my youthful cigarettes, smoked in moderation. Let me emphasise this point about moderation. When one first smokes, every cigarette is felt as a pleasure. In order to renew and increase the pleasure one multiplies the number of cigarettes until cigarette smoking becomes a habit. As a result, after a time, one is sensible of a feeling of vague discomfort whenever one is not smoking, so that by now one is smoking to allay a need.

I hope the reader will notice the difference. To begin with, every cigarette was a plus value in terms of pleasure; now absence of cigarettes is a minus value – one experiences positive displeasure when not smoking – and the cigarette is resorted to in order to bring one back to normal. Thus the perpetual cigarette smoker expends an ever-increasing amount of time, energy, and money in order to obtain an ever diminishing amount of pleasure. What the wise man does is to discover the number of cigarettes which will give him the maximum amount of pleasure, and then rigidly stick to that number. Wiser still is the man who does not smoke cigarettes at all, but a pipe, which is easier to control.

I smoke a pipe. I never smoke until after midday, which means that I never feel the need for smoking in the morning. I have one pipe after lunch, one pipe after tea, and two or three after the evening meal. Thus I am sensible of no discomfort when not smoking, and each pipe is looked forward to and enjoyed as a positive pleasure.

A Prejudice Against The Law

Too many magistrates tend to be rigid and pompous about the minutiae of court behaviour. One gets the impression sometimes that the whole apparatus of the law is designed to lay undue importance upon form in order to cover a consciousness which lurks in the hearts of many lawyers of lack of substance, like those nuts which are all husk and no kernel. A young woman appears in court without her hat; a young man appears in court without his tie. The magistrate starts scolding. "How dare you," he says, "show so little respect to my court? Go away and get properly dressed!" What pompous humbug! Is the magistrate the Deity that a woman may not appear uncovered before him? Apparently he thinks so. Yet why *should* one respect his court when the court makes such an ass of itself?

We do not, after all, ask to attend it; most of us are made to go there whether we like it or not. And who, pray, is this magistrate fellow that he should determine whether we should wear a hat or whether we should not, whether we should smile or whether we should not. My doctor, my solicitor, my bank manager, do not take it upon themselves to decide what clothes I shall wear or what emotions I shall express.

A girl, I read, has just been reprimanded for smiling in court at her brother. Now why on earth should a magistrate go out of his way to prohibit a perfectly normal expression of human emotion? The world is grim enough to-day; why should he add to its grimness by forbidding a girl to smile? Is he afraid for his dignity? Presumably he is. Has, then, the magistrate, has even the law, so little innate dignity that it cannot bear anybody to smile in its presence? Those who are for ever standing upon their dignity should beware lest it give way under the strain.

And Against Performing Animals

Love for animals? Of course, subject to certain safeguards, as for example, that it is kept within bounds, that it is not an extension of self-love, and that it is not used to debauch and degrade animals into flatterers of, and fawners upon human beings.

Let me expand this last. Some people feel in general that they are failures in life, and in particular that they are not loved as they deserve to be. So they debauch animals to give them the affection which they do not get from human beings.

Some are frustrated: they want to exercise power and have no opportunity. So they use animals to give them the feeling of power which they cannot obtain from men and women. Some people want admiration, but in them there is nothing that their acquaintances can admire. So they get admiration from animals. Those in whom there is little to love and to admire have only to look into the eyes of their dog to obtain from him the loving admiration which the world withholds. In loving animals, such people are only, in effect, loving themselves, and using animals as an extension of their self-love.

One is reinforced in this view by reflecting on the hypocrisy of many alleged animal-lovers who connive at the most appalling cruelties upon animals they have never seen in order to clothe themselves in their skins and furs, hoping by this means to increase both their comfort and their sexual attractiveness.

It is because *I* hate cruelties to animals that I am against the training of performing animals, precisely because I don't believe that animals can be taught to perform without cruelty. People say, "Look at the tricks that my cat or dog does for fun." No doubt. But the performing animal has to do his trick at a certain time, in a certain place, and whether he feels like it or not. He has to do it, that is to say, not for fun.

In a case in which a circus showman was convicted and fined for

cruelty to performing dogs – it was in the West London Police Court on May 27th, 1943 – this conversation took place :

Magistrate : Do you put it as high as to say it is impossible to train animals from the circus point of view without cruelty ?

Prosecutor : Yes, without *any* exceptions.

Magistrate : Now we know where we are.

In his summing up the magistrate, who presumably had gone carefully into the evidence, said : “I don’t believe that animals can be taught unnatural tricks without some element of cruelty. I find it an extraordinary proposition to believe that the trainer used no cruelty.” Now the magistrate had already agreed that all *performing* animal acts are unnatural.

In my view, a civilised society would not tolerate the public spectacle of performing animals. There may be controversy as to whether the magistrate was right in holding that the public performances of animals involves cruelty to all the animals taking part. But the controversy is beside the point. Surely it should be enough that the training of animals for public performances ever involves *any cruelty to any animal*.

For do we after all deserve that animals should suffer for our amusement? Do we want men to be encouraged to be cruel in order that beasts may be made silly? For surely these things that the animals do are very silly. Indeed, the whole business of training performing animals involves turning men into beasts in order that they may turn beasts into imbeciles.

When the great Russian physiologist, Pavlov, made his researches into the conditioning of dogs, by carefully associating the striking of gongs with the presenting of dinner, he caused dogs’ mouths to water whenever gongs were struck alone without being accompanied by dinner – animal trainers pointed out that there was nothing new in this; the trick had been known to them, they said, for years.

Take, for example, the case of dancing bears. A bear is put into

a copper; a fire is lit under the copper. When the floor of the copper begins to get hot the bear naturally tries to remove his feet from the burning surface, lifting first one and then the other, lifting them more rapidly as it gets hotter still. This is called dancing. While this process is going on a violin is played. Then one day the violin is played without the hot copper and the bear "dances" as before.

Yet civilised people pay vast sums of money each year to go to circuses and music halls to witness these performances.

Festivals and Food

Christmas

What does one usually associate with Christmas? Why, Christmas cards, Christmas presents, over-eating and (if possible) over-drinking, and family reunions. What do I think of these customs which have been handed down to us?

Let me take them one at a time. First, Christmas cards. They are, I think, an invention of the devil whereby people buy articles of no value and present them to other people who really don't want them. I do not believe that friendship is served by such a cheap and easy sacrifice upon its altar. Friendship, I suggest, demands certain obligations and owes them – obligations which are not discharged by sending once a year a picture in crude colours, badly painted by somebody else, featuring robins, cottages, snow, and holly, with one's name scrawled at the bottom.

If you really want to remind a person of yourself at Christmas and send him your best wishes and greetings – a very praiseworthy thing to want to do – I suggest that you pay your friend the compliment of putting yourself to the trouble of writing a letter, instead of taking refuge behind some conventional greeting invented by a clerk in a stationer's shop, or the printer in a Christmas card factory. But, what most of us want is the pleasure of thinking that we are remembered without the trouble of doing anything worth remembering, and so we send Christmas cards. I should like to claim the

proud record of not having sent a Christmas card these thirty years, although many people regularly send me one.

Even Christmas presents all too often proceed from the vanity of the giver, who wishes to be remembered and thought generous, rather than from any real desire to benefit the "givee."

What a burden this convention of the Christmas present imposes! People give them to you; you know in advance that people will give them to you, and you know, too, that you ought to give them back. But you haven't time to be bothered with such triviality, and then you feel an ungrateful beast, and you know that they will think you an ungrateful beast.

If one really wanted to benefit the "givee," one would give him or her money. This, in my experience, is always useful and never refused. Or buy him books or, even better, buy him book tokens so that he can choose the books for himself and not have your taste imposed upon him. Or, if he cares for music, buy him gramophone records. People who have gramophones put all their friends in their debt by relieving them for ever afterwards from the burden of that wearisome speculation of "What shall I give him for a Christmas present?" Give him a year's subscription to a library, or buy him a year's subscription to some luxury paper which you know he happens to like, or—best of all—draw on behalf of some young student who cannot pay them for himself a cheque for his fees to a University College, a Training Centre, or a course of lectures.

These are really useful presents, but they are presents which nobody likes giving because most of them involve no visible memento chosen by the giver and installed in the "givee's" house, on his mantelpiece, on his table, or in his bedroom, so that the thought of the giver shall be always with him. Now that, of course, is precisely what the giver likes.

All over the South of England before the war in boarding-houses, hotels and flats, there were women living unoccupied, wasted lives

totally lacking in significance. What a fuss they made about the Christmas presents and the parcels, and, while the fuss lasted, they were happy. There is no harm whatever in this, provided they did not expect busy people to reply in kind.

Over-eating and drinking (if possible)? Yes! First, because it is good to have a "bust" occasionally, and secondly, because it enables families who meet together at Christmas to tolerate each other. It is, in my view, a myth that the members of most families love one another or even want to be with one another. I remember well my own reaction to the drove of uncles and aunts who used to descend upon us at Christmas, whom I was expected to revere and to love just because they were my uncles and aunts. Why, I asked, should I? I hardly ever saw them; I had nothing in common with them, and yet I was made to feel unfilial, cold hearted, and all the rest of it, because I did not slobber over them with affection at sight.

At Christmas-time there are dumped down together in the same house a job lot of people who see one another very rarely, who have very little in common, who are sometimes – for this happens all too often in families – riven by family feuds. They have to pretend to be happy, hearty and affectionate, and what a strain it is. My own view is that Christmas would pass off very well if we did not try to enjoy ourselves quite so hard, since, after all, one cannot enjoy oneself to order.

Presents for Children

There are, of course, exceptions to my remarks about Christmas presents. There are the old, who normally tend to be forgotten and like to be remembered, men serving overseas, idle people to whom Christmas present buying gives an opportunity of feeling important during the weeks before Christmas, and, of course, children.

It doesn't, I think, really matter much what you give a child; that is to say it doesn't much matter what toys a child has to play with provided they are sufficiently old to get broken and to give him the pleasure of trying to patch them up, and sufficiently cheap for the household not to go up in blue smoke when the child breaks them. Of course, to any properly regulated child, the best toys in the world cost no money at all, being the four elements – water, earth, fire – and, may I add, air, because what fun there is in blowing bubbles, in whistling and in making faces by blowing out the cheeks?

Of all childish pleasures the greatest, surely, is messing about with water and earth, as when damming up a stream, or with fire and sticks, as when making a bonfire on an autumn afternoon, all of which suggests to me that the main reason for wanting expensive, elaborate, or highly coloured toys is to be found in the pleasure of crowing over somebody else because you've got them and he hasn't. "Look," you say, "my whatever it is – is bigger, or brighter, or faster, or noisier than yours." And you give yourself moral marks accordingly, when all you ought to give yourself credit for is for having had the wit to choose parents who have a bigger balance at the bank than somebody else. And even then it is doubtful whether the choice was made by you, or for you. In other words, the excellence of your toys is a quality for which the credit belongs not to you but to your parents.

This does not detract from the importance of excelling at games. Because your skill, your speed, your endurance, and your timing in games are qualities for which you can take credit.

Presents for Adults

Precious stones and jewellery? Emphatically no! I find no beauty in diamonds, the most expensive of precious stones, but

whatever beauty they may have possessed did not become less when paste imitations were invented. Nevertheless, the effect of the invention was to depreciate the value of diamonds.

Why? Because the diamond could no longer be regarded as so unerring an index of wealth. I deduce that people wear jewels mainly to display their wealth. Wealth is like power in that, for most people, it is not enough to have it; one must be known to have it. The taste in precious stones seems to me to be the taste of children. It seems to me to be analogous to the sense of beauty which finds expression in the faces of girls on chocolate boxes and magazine covers.

Flowers, then? Most people like flowers, and are willing to spend large sums on obtaining them. Which makes one ask the obvious question, Why do people like them so much?

You know, in a way it's a silly question, because there are some things which, it is obvious, we must like for themselves. Now to say you like something for itself is to say you like it for no reason. For any *reason* you could give for liking something would take the form of specifying something else *for the sake of which* you like it.

Thus a man likes money because it buys footmen and silver plate; and he likes footmen and silver plate because they minister to his ambition and love of ostentation. And why is he subject to ambition and prone to ostentation? Because, I suppose, he is ambitious and ostentatious; and that is all there is to it. Another wants money because it buys chocolates and strawberries and cream. Now why does he want chocolates and strawberries and cream? Because they give him agreeable sensations. Why does he want agreeable sensations? There is no answer; one likes agreeable sensations because they are agreeable. Similarly with flowers.

Is it, perhaps, snobbery that makes people like them? Not often, I think, in war time. But there is, I think, something hidden involved – something which might be denoted by the word *nostalgia*. Nostalgia for what? For country sights, country scenes, and country

sounds, perhaps for a little time alone with nature; things for which we all have an instinctive need in our hearts, a need which is 99 times out of 100 repressed by the conditions of our urban existence, but which, beaten about the head and driven into the darkness, has, nevertheless, still life enough to leap into consciousness, even in a town, at the sight of flowers.

You think this is far-fetched? Possibly it is, and yet doesn't it give an explanation of the familiar fact that, much as one likes to see wild flowers even in a town, one feels a certain sense of inappropriateness because they *are* in a town. The primroses, the violets, and, above all, the bluebells – how much better they are in their natural setting, a fact which suggests to me that one of the reasons for liking them is because of their association *with* the natural state. Ought one, then, to pluck them and bring them to town? I don't know. What I do know is that one of the few solid advantages which the war brought was the absence of hordes of people going into the country at week-ends and tearing wild flowers up by the roots, with the result that during the last year or two wild flowers have been given a chance to grow and spread.

A Present for the World

Still on the subject of presents, next I am asked what present I would give to the world, to humanity.

Here are two answers which really make the same point in different ways. The first answer is "the drying up of all the oil wells, so that there is no more petrol in the world, no more aeroplanes, therefore, and no more cars." I don't expect you to agree with me about the cars, but it seems to me to be clear that the aeroplane and the V1 and the V2 (which, I imagine rely upon petrol, like all our other devilments) and all the coming extensions of the V2 will presently destroy our civilisation, unless we can learn the wisdom to control their use. For these inventions of ours are in themselves

neither good things nor bad. What they do is to enable men to satisfy their desires and further their purposes. If men's desires and purposes are, on the whole, good and make for human welfare, the more satisfaction, the greater furtherance, the better. If, on the whole, they are evil and make for human misery, then the more they are satisfied, the more they are furthered, the worse.

At the present time, most human desires, as collectively expressed in the policies of States, seem to make for human misery. They are desires for the exploitation of economically inferior classes, the subjugation of weaker neighbours, the domination of subject peoples. Science has enabled us to gratify these desires on a larger scale than ever before, and, therefore, has, on the whole, increased the misery of the world.

And so I come to my second gift, which, as I say, makes the same point, the gift of wisdom; the gift, that is to say, of applying our great and growing powers to things which will make for human happiness instead of human misery. The point is, surely, a simple one. Give a schoolboy an air-gun and he can break a few windows or shoot a sparrow or two, but that is the extent of the damage. But give him a Tommy-gun and you turn him into a public danger. You don't, after all, give the baby a box of matches. Apply the parable and we get the answer, let the schoolboy grow up, let the baby cease to be babyish, and there is no reason why he should not be given the power. So my real answer is the gift of wisdom.

But, failing more wisdom, I fall back upon less power. And so I come back to where I started and demand that the oil wells should dry up.

A Fixed Easter?

I am all in favour of the campaign for a fixed Easter. Easter is for most of us the first holiday of the year, the first occasion for a break after Christmas; and how often it is ruined for us by appalling

weather, because it occurs at the beginning of the English spring.

When somebody asked the Duke of Wellington what he thought of the English climate, he replied: "For eight months in the year it is the best in the world. As for the other four—Gad, Sir, I don't know a better."

On the whole I agree. The only time of the year when I do feel inclined to demur is at the end of March and the beginning of April, when there are long spells of east wind, which drain all the colour from things, or there are flurries of snow and sleet, or a series of hail showers. . . .

Moreover, real spring never really gets going until three or four weeks after everybody supposes that it does. There is always that long waiting period from about the beginning of March to the beginning of April, when nothing seems to be moving although you can't get the feeling out of your bones that it ought to be. If there is bright sunshine during this period it makes the country look its very worst, showing up all the shabbiness of its old winter clothes, decked out as yet in none of the gay embellishments of spring. The rains have not fallen, the springs have not broken, the soil is parched, the grass is shrivelled. Five weeks of east winds have done their work, and the country is looking at its shabbiest. In three or four weeks' time the whole scene, one hopes, will have changed. But it is precisely in this waiting period that an early Easter so often falls.

Hence, I believe that Easter should be fixed for the third, or conceivably, the fourth Sunday in April. That is the high time of Spring. The trees are fully out, but the leaves still show each a different shade of green. The primroses are at their most abundant, flooring the woods with a carpet of yellow. The bluebells are beginning, and the blossoming trees, apples, pear, and prunus are at the top of their form. The birds are singing with full throats, and building nests and laying eggs, to be found, but I hope not rifled, by the adventurous young. The cuckoo has just been heard. All

nature is stirring and the sap in one's own veins is stirring too. It is :

"In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring."

Aren't we entitled to the best possible break that the seasons can provide? It is so rarely that we get into the country. May not, when we do, we be allowed to see the country at its best? And most years we don't see it at its best because Easter is too early.

Summer or Greenwich Time?

A fixed Easter—Yes; but please don't let us have any more "double summer time." For the farmer, it has no advantages, only disadvantages. For much of the summer he still has to get up in the dark, and go to bed in the light; it is harder, therefore, for him to get up and harder to get to sleep.

The early hours are not much good for grass cutting or hay making, because the dew is still thick on the ground; the cows don't like being milked so early, nor do the two extra hours appreciably lengthen the period available since in times of pressure, such as harvest time, the farmer and his men work, and always have worked, all the hours of daylight anyway.

Apart from the difficulties which "double summer" time makes in the country, the over-early milking of cows, the difficulties of heavy dews, the getting up in the very early dawn at four o'clock by God's time, there is the constant strain of too much daylight. I hate those days when it *never* grows dark, when it is *never* time to draw the curtains, put on the lights, and make all snug for the evening, when one is never free from the challenge of the out-of-doors. It is for me psychologically difficult almost to the point of impossibility to sit quietly at home on a fine evening with the sunlight pouring down outside. Most people feel the same. You

simply must go out, stroll in the streets, look at the girls, dig in the allotment, visit friends, go to the pub, with the result that your day is correspondingly lengthened, lengthened until it becomes too long.

To me – and here I speak, I suppose, only for myself – there is something infinitely melancholy about those long summer evenings when it seems wrong to go in and yet one is too tired to stay out with enjoyment.

And then, if you are me, you begin to long for the time when you can pull the curtains, draw up to the fire, take off your shoes, tell yourself that you haven't got to go out any more, and relax.

In war-time, of course, it was different. From the point of view of town work, work in offices and work in factories, the more light, and the longer light, the better. And obviously from the point of view of getting home, the less of black-out time the better. But in peace-time, no. Everything seems to me to be against double summer time. For my part I would abolish even single summer time; but here as a non-office and non-factory worker, I am speaking only for myself.

New Year Resolutions

I've given them up. I used to make them once, resolutions directed to curing what I considered to be my distinctive defaults of body: e.g., the resolution to eat less, and to do physical exercises designed to reduce the tummy (belly-presses I used to call them) before breakfast; and of mind: e.g., to be better tempered, less irritable, less unscrupulous, to work harder.

Every year I made these resolutions; every year, I suppose, most of us do, hoping in our foolish way that the future will be better than the past—listen to Dryden on the subject:

*None would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain.*

— and that we can somehow make our future selves better than our past by making promises to ourselves that we will be better. And then, you know, one notices that the future is not in fact better than the past; one notices, too, that in spite of our resolutions we don't grow either happier, wiser, or better as we grow older.

So in the end I gave them up. One or two persisted after the others had been abandoned. For example, a resolution I made against my habit of always eating the best things first; the best mixed gums, the best strawberries, the best bit of meat on the plate, and so on, until one day somebody pointed out to me that, in view of the known uncertainty of human life, I should not tempt Providence in that way. "Suppose," he said, "it pleased God to take you before you got to the end of the basket, or the sweets, or the plateful. How sold you would feel at having left the best to the last."

My resolution against too many second helpings persisted right up to the war, but that has now become unnecessary owing to causes beyond my control.

And How to Keep Them

As I don't now make New Year Resolutions, I feel I should be absolved from giving any advice or propounding any formula to help anyone keep them who is ill-advised enough to make them.

I don't believe that such a formula exists. The view that you can change yourself by merely resolving to do so is pure wishful thinking. After all, our behaviour is the outcome of our character, and though you may be dissatisfied with your character you cannot act "out of it."

And there is a particular reason for the ineffectiveness of resolutions.

It is that they are so often the products of impulse. The New Year comes and looking back over ourselves as we were in the old year, we perceive what changes are desirable in our character, and proceed to desire them.

In other words, a New Year's resolution is the expression of dissatisfaction with oneself; the expression, therefore, of a desire to change oneself. Now you don't change your nature merely by desiring to change it; the impulse fades, and when it has gone nothing is left to sustain the change to which the impulse prompted you. More than an alteration in the calendar is necessary to effect an alteration in the self; nor is improvement to be had on such cheap and easy terms.

The difficulty is that we have no source of will-power or store of energy within ourselves with which to effect the changes save such as springs from that same old self, with all its bad habits, desires, weaknesses, slacknesses, and all the rest of it, which we are desiring to change. As Plato puts it, men, like liquids, "find their level." They are drawn as by a sort of moral gravitation into the life and company which befits them, and there, as he puts it, "do and have done to them what it befits them to do and to endure." This sounds depressing, precisely because it sounds so like determinism. We are what we are. We are, that is to say, what our circumstances, heredity and initial disposition have made us, and we can never be any different. Is that what I am saying?

Yes, I think that it is, provided that I am to confine my answering to this order of reality and don't take into account the possibility of assistance from another order. But it is, as I understand it, a cardinal point of the Christian doctrine that if we really desire to do better, pray for help, and believe that our prayers will be answered, then they will be answered and we shall do better. In other words, the doctrine of Divine Grace assumes that God will help us by infusing His Grace into us. But if we don't believe this, or do

believe it but take no steps to give effect to our belief, then I don't think there is any short cut or formula for betterment.

To try to be better unassisted is like trying to lift oneself up by one's own moral braces. Psycho-analysts can, of course, help abnormal people, but I am talking here of the ordinary normal sinner.

For my part, I am coming to believe that the only way that I can really alter my nature is through assistance given from without, assistance which is vouchsafed in response to prayer.

In that sense, I suppose, it is fair to say that, whenever one prays, one *is* resolving to be a better and nicer person. But very few of us pray properly, and most of us don't pray at all. So we don't become better and nicer people.

On Birthdays and Shaw

Do you remember the great fuss and to-do in Germany on Hitler's birthday? And the telegram of congratulations from Mussolini? Or on Mussolini's in Italy, and the telegram from Hitler? How very different from Bernard Shaw, who on his last birthday discouraged greetings as being unkind reminders of his passing years.

How like Shaw to object to the celebration of his birthday. I doubt if there was ever a man who resented growing old as much as he does. "Of course I hate growing old," I once heard him say. "But, you see, it's the only way I have yet discovered of living a long life." And how persistently and gratifyingly Shaw refuses to die. It is not much more than a year ago, when he was in a low state of health, that I was asked to prepare an obituary notice against the possibility of his death. But instead of dying he recently celebrated his 89th birthday, and the obituary notice had to be hastily changed into an article of congratulation. After all, it did not require very much changing. For what matters about a man like

Shaw is not the life he lives, but the thoughts he thinks and the work he does.

Yet, even in saying that, I believe I am doing him an injustice. It would be true enough of any other literary man or dramatist or thinker of our age, but somehow it is not quite true of Shaw. For he is, with one exception, the only great man whom I have ever met who was not a complete "flop" when I met him. He gave me an impression of greatness, of being somehow exempt from the ordinary frailties of humanity, and this he managed to do without arousing that uneasy suspicion of priggishness which is evoked by most apparently superior beings. Alone among living Englishmen he has become a legend in his lifetime, his name a by-word for generosity and magnanimity.

I think Shaw is quite right not to demand a *special* celebration for his birthday, since in the hearts of most of those who belong to the worlds of literature, philosophy, drama, or Socialism, he is in a more or less constant condition of being celebrated as the greatest writer and thinker of our time.

But the dictators' desire for birthday celebrations are just what you would expect. They had to get someone to make a fuss of them to keep up their courage and assure them that they were still there. In a famous story of Henry James's, a public man who is all talk and bombast signifying nothing, literally goes out of existence whenever people are not looking at him or talking about him. Hitler and Mussolini, especially Mussolini, were a bit like that.

The Enjoyment of Food

Festivals were originally and are still intended to be feast-days, and lead, therefore, by a natural transition to the topic of food. Not that it is a very difficult path to follow these days. I can remember J. B. Priestley in one of his broadcast Postscripts in the

early years of the war describing how people who had never before thought much about food were obsessed with it during the war. And we have become food conscious, but food conscious in the wrong sort of way; we have been more intent on getting enough to eat than in getting the best cooking.

I hold that the cultivation of the palate for the appreciation of exquisite flavours in food, and let me add, in drink, is an art. What is the condition in which we can pursue this art? When we are ravening with hunger, so that we gobble up anything that is presented to us, or when we are already reasonably well fed, so that, appetite being satisfied, there is nothing but the intrinsic agreeableness of the food to attract us? Eating in the first capacity we are animals, in the second, artists. The enjoyment in the first case may be greater, but in the second it is more elevated, more refined, more aesthetic, more spiritual. Greater pleasure, therefore, for the starving hunter, but more desirable pleasure for the gourmet at the carefully selected meal.

Note further that the hunter's pleasure is conditioned by pain, the amount of pleasure that he takes in his venison or his boiled bacon, or his pemmican, or his bully beef, or his dried peas, or whatever it is that he eats, being directly proportional to the degree of his preceding hunger. His is, then, what Plato called an impure or mixed pleasure, since it is mixed with and dependent upon an element of pain as its necessary ingredient. But we are presuming that the gourmet at his carefully chosen meal is not hungry to begin with, and therefore endures no pain as a condition of his enjoyment. His experience then is wholly pleasant, and the pleasure is, as Plato would say, wholly pure.

Here are three cases to illustrate this generalisation :

Shipwrecked on a desert island I make a meal of the cabin boy. Impure pleasure, since the flesh of the boy is not intrinsically enjoyable, and my enjoyment is dependent on the extent of my need.

Well breakfasted and well lunched, I dine on five courses at a

first-rate restaurant. I am already full, when there is presented (obviously this is a peace-time example) a delicious savoury. Since my enjoyment of the savoury is not dependent upon my preceding hunger, since there is no pain, but only pleasure, the pleasure is pure.

Finally, a third case. Ravening with hunger I dine at the restaurant. My pleasure is sharpened by my preceding need, and since the food is, we will suppose, delicious, my experience is also intrinsically agreeable. On this scale of pleasantness, case one is the lowest, case two half-way, and case three the highest.

Food and Intelligence

I don't believe that diet has much to do with brain power or intelligence. I know that it is often said that too much meat is bad, that fish is good for the brain, whatever that may mean, and that, if we are to believe the Scots, porridge, if eaten with salt, is good for the character; but I have not noticed that men who live at Grimsby are more intelligent than men who live elsewhere, or that men who live north of the Tweed have better characters than those of us who live in London.

What does matter from the point of view of intelligence and character is not so much the nature as the amount of one's diet. Most of us over-eat; I do it myself. Life, we are told, rightly or wrongly, may be maintained on two or three handfuls of rice a day. That is a hard doctrine; few of us would insist on the austerity of only eating enough to live, but I must put it on record that on the few occasions on which, either through poverty or queasiness of the stomach, or inability to get food, I have had less to eat than I could do with, my intelligence and efficiency have been sensibly increased.

In fact, however, the temptation of gluttony is usually too much for me. I love rich and varied food, and if I am tempted in the

middle of the day, I eat so much that I want to go to sleep. If I can't go to sleep, I become gloomy, dull, irritable, morose, and – which brings me back to the point – stupid.

Why stupid? No doubt there is a physiological reason. When the stomach is impounded for an over-elaborate process of digestion, the blood flows to it as it does to any part of the body which is being overworked – flows, therefore, away from the brain. Again, one of the by-products of over-feeding is constipation. Constipation is the thief of time. Not only is time wasted by constipation, but the blood stream is poisoned, the brain is fatigued, and we become slow, headachy, and stupid.

Conversely, fakirs, saints, and mystics who live on a few vegetables or none at all, find that their spirits are refined and their intelligence sharpened. They become aware of more of the universe than ordinary people, and of profounder levels of the universe; in fact, they see God. In this sense I think it is clear that the quantity of one's diet affects both the nature and the powers of the mind and the spirit.

But, in the long run, it is impossible to lay down general rules. Of the two men of letters whom I most admire, George Bernard Shaw and Dr. Johnson, Shaw lives sparsely on vegetables, while Johnson dined prodigiously on quantities of meat, beer, and wine.

Coffee, Alcohol and Tea

It is difficult to speak of the effects of coffee and alcohol on the brain without being technical, but, briefly, two sorts of impulses play continuously over the brain, those of excitation – in other words, those mainly arising from stimuli from outside – and those of inhibition, as the result of which we do not immediately yield, or don't yield at all, to the impulses of excitation.

For example, all movements which require careful timing, kicking

a football or hitting a tennis ball, depend on inhibition. When, as a young player, I first became aware of the stimulus of the tennis ball I responded to it by hitting out wildly, and hit the ball not only over the net but over the back netting as well. Later, I learned to delay the first hitting response to the excitatory stimulus of the tennis ball, until the precise moment that I could hit it to the best advantage.

Now, alcohol inhibits the impulses of inhibition, which is, of course, why we boast when we are partially "tight." It is quite natural to want to boast (look at small boys), but as we go through life we learn to inhibit the natural impulse to praise ourselves except when we are in our cups, when the impulse that inhibits boasting is weakened.

Now caffeine, which is one of the main elements in coffee, increases the power of the impulses of excitation. Under its stimulus the brain responds more readily and more quickly to these impulses. Hence the effect of alcohol and coffee are both alike and unlike. They are alike in the sense that both increase the reactive power of the brain; but while alcohol does in by inhibiting inhibitions, coffee does it by increasing excitations.

I don't know much about the physical effects of tea as compared with those of coffee and alcohol. I do remember that our social histories tell us that it was once the custom to drink beer for breakfast, and note in passing that as beer grows progressively weaker, the extra million and a quarter gallons that are alleged to have been drunk last year consist not of beer but of water.

It is the psychology behind tea which I find interesting. Tea drinking has been a civilising influence for a century and a half. In the eighteenth century our ancestors fed enormously and drank brutally. It was the mark of a gentleman to finish his dinner under the table. Effects of gin upon the populace of the towns were so disastrous that four out of every five children born in

London during the middle of the eighteenth century died in the first year of life.

In the nineteenth century tea was increasingly drunk, first by women. (I note that of the many alleged distinctions between men and women, one of the most certain and the most universal is that men like beer and women don't. I never knew a woman drink beer, in so far as she drank it at all, except to please, or to show off before a man.) When dinner was finished, in the nineteenth century, the women left the company of the men, who continued to sit drinking round the table after the manner of their eighteenth-century forbears. The women had withdrawn. Whither? To the withdrawing, or drawing, room. (Hence, incidentally, its name.)

What were they doing there? Pulling people's characters to pieces and drinking tea. Presently the men began to join them.

As the century proceeds they join them in greater numbers and they join them earlier. Why? Partly, no doubt, because of the attraction of the women's company, but also because they, too, were acquiring the taste for tea.

Tea, then, was a civilising influence. It increased the degree of contact between men and women, thus bringing women more into the atmosphere of male conversation about affairs and ideas, and at the same time taming the comparative brutality of country gentlemen and town business men by requiring them to behave before the women. You can measure the degree of a society's civilisation by the extent to which men and women meet, and participate in joint pursuits, and take pleasure in one another's company and conversation, for purposes other than those of sex.

The more tea, then, the better. I am almost inclined to say the more beer the better. Why suggest that they are mutually exclusive? I drink both in large quantities.

On Travelling Abroad

On Going Abroad

I have talked about holidays elsewhere in this book, but they have always been holidays in this country. But what do I think about holidays abroad? Is it a good thing, I am asked, for people to travel abroad, or should they see England first?

Travel, we are always being told, broadens the mind; we are told also that it makes for international goodwill, and that our ancestors considered no education complete without a Grand Tour. But so much depends on the way you travel; on *how* people go abroad. If you are going to travel, as most English people do to-day, in company with a lot of other English people, you might just as well stay at home. Most of the English are too lazy to have learnt the language, and, therefore, they cannot talk to foreigners. Their intercourse with them is confined to porters, commissionaires, taximen, waiters, guides, and so on, who speak a few words of conventional English and make what money they can out of them. Many English people try to get everything as much like as possible to what they are used to at home. They demand cups of tea at all hours and seem, in general, to take the view that the Continent would be all very well if it were not for its inhabitants.

The right way to go abroad, especially if you are young, is to go and stay with a family, learn the family's language, and live the family's life. If you can't do that, the next best thing is to go on foot or bicycle, to stay not at hotels, but at youth hostels, where you will be sure to meet lots of other young people with whom you

can talk and exchange ideas. The great thing, of course, is to get as far away as possible from your own people and never to talk to an Englishman if you can help it.

Abroad you can roam almost at will about the countryside. In almost every civilised and "uncivilised" country, except Great Britain, the public have a right, whether local or traditional, to roam at will over wild country, to climb mountains, and to wander over the moorlands. This is usually forbidden in Great Britain by "sportsmen" anxious to shoot pheasants and grouse. "You cannot have both ramblers and grouse," as the candid landowner said just before the war in a B.B.C. talk.

But the traveller will find in almost every civilised country – in Sweden, in Switzerland, in Italy, in Poland and Holland, not to speak of Canada and America and New Zealand – national parks and nature reserves which are left unspoiled for the benefit of the walker and the nature enjoyer, and where accommodation is expressly provided for him. Compare the situation here. Scotland and the north of England contain some of the loveliest wild country in the world, yet owing to expense and the difficulty of getting accommodation, young men who want to climb mountains, to sleep rough, to have adventures, and to find their souls in communion with wild nature will be well advised to go abroad, to Switzerland, or to Norway.

So much for wild country. But every young man should also see something of civilised life. Most Continental people, and especially the French, know far more about the art of living than we do. They know more particularly how to enjoy themselves and to get pleasure from little things. Look at a party of Frenchmen and girls sitting outside a café eating and drinking together. The young Englishman going abroad will realise for the first time how pleasant eating and drinking can be in company with a pretty girl sitting outside on a pavement in the sunlight. He can get drinks of infinite variety instead of having always to swill beer, and he can drink where he

sits to have his meal. If he is lucky, he may well enjoy that civilising privilege of making love to, and being made love to by a French girl and being taught the ropes.

He will see how happily Continental people spend Sunday, noting the infinite variety of amusements which are offered abroad on the one leisure day of the week. This, instead of having to hang about the streets, as he does at home, waiting for the pubs to open because the local authority has shut up the cinemas and the theatres. He may even learn how to sing instead of making that dreadful moaning, yowling noise which for most English young people passes for singing when they feel a bit exhilarated. I suppose the English are the only people in the world who don't sing naturally and easily as an expression of gaiety and good spirits.

Here, then, are all sorts of reasons for going abroad, but for my part I would sooner stay at home. That is partly because I have grown to hate the paraphernalia of travelling. What a paradox it is that in a world in which we can move about more quickly than ever before, our actual progress was never so slow. How burdened we are with photographs and passports and forms; how badgered and pestered by officials; how held up by regulations! Miserable little doles of currency are handed out to us. Every conceivable indignity is imposed upon us.

I am getting old and have seen the world, and find all that sort of thing very tiresome. In fact, I agree with a remark made by Henry James, "the older I grow, the more I enjoy the pleasures of not travelling."

On Travelling by Train

But if I do have to travel, then I prefer travelling by train. The railways are as safe as houses – safer since people started dropping bombs on houses from above, and the earth (as recently at Brighton)

started falling away from them from below – and infinitely safer than cars. We had, it is true, early in 1946 one of the worst periods for years in the history of British railways. It was a week marked by an unprecedented number of accidents and everybody began to chatter about the dangerousness of the railways. How many were killed in the week? Thirty-three. Consider an ordinary average month on the roads. How many are killed? Five hundred and forty. That is to say, one hundred and thirty-five a week. So in an average week cars are about four times as dangerous as railways are in one of the most dangerous weeks in the railways' history. Did the reader ever hear the parable about beams and motes? When the railways have got rid of obsolete rolling-stock and furbished up their lines, and when the number of cars has been multiplied by four or five – what we see now are only the first few swallows heralding the terrors of the summers to come – the disparity will be infinitely greater.

Are the railways likely to be superseded as a mode of travel? Certainly not. Before the war I used to look forward to travelling on trains. You could eat, drink, read, write, sleep, or talk as your fancy was. In a car you can't eat or drink – the food and drink get jerked all over the place – you can talk only in snatches, you can't think, you can't read, you can't sleep, and you arrive at the end of your journey very cross, very cold, all liver and no legs. For years past I have made a point of reading on long railway journeys – in fact, the train is one of the few places in which I can read. Since, however, people got to know the commonplace features of my undistinguished countenance, this blessed recourse is often denied to me. Hence I advocate a division of railway carriages into "talking" and "non-talking" compartments.

Let me not, however, conclude this answer without pointing out that our railways are at present (winter, 1946) not only very bad but much worse than they might be, owing to complacent inefficiency on the part of their staffs, who have got so used to trains

being late that they take it for granted that trains should be late; so used to supposing that travellers' convenience is of no importance that they take it for granted that they should be inconvenienced – and don't care a damn.

On Travelling by Air

But compared with air travel, the discomforts of even the worst railway travelling sink into insignificance. When I went abroad on a lecture tour for the British Council in the Spring of 1946, I had to travel by air. How I hated it! I thought that every fresh mode of travel that the human race invents is more disagreeable, if possible, than the last. Travelling by air, being the last, is certainly of all forms of travel, the most disagreeable. On a boat one can at least be sick in darkness, space, privacy, and comfort, but in an aeroplane one sits upright in a little armchair in the full public gaze and makes what shift one can with a small paper bag. On a car and in a boat I am almost entirely without nerves, but being suspended in and projected through the air without visible means of support seems to me so instinctively unnatural that I am never wholly at ease, and as the plane lurches and pitches in air-pockets, as it tries to land in mist and fog; fails, swoops up, and then tries to land yet again – all of which happened to me on the way to Sweden – as my ears throb and pulse and ache with the rapid changes of altitude, I feel all the sensations of abject terror.

Thus continuously my heart and my tummy are fighting for the right to possess my mouth; my heart being in it through fear, my tummy through sickness. Finally, the tummy wins and I am too sick to feel afraid.

Personal Reactions to Travel

So much for getting there. What about *being* there? For my own part, I never go abroad but that I make a vow never to do so again. And so it was this time when I went to Sweden and Denmark. Partly this is due to the miseries of travelling.

Partly to the miseries of hotels. Being an "important person," I was, when abroad, always given a grand bedroom complete with bath, toilet, central heating, representations of old masters on the walls, armchairs, and comfortable bed, and I was duly impressed. But a bedroom is a place to sleep in, and a first requisite of bedrooms is that they should be quiet. Practically no grand hotel bedroom is quiet. First, there is the hotel hot-water system: whenever anybody on the corridor turns a tap or pulls a plug, the pipes in the wall gurgle and sizzle, bubble and fizz, as if the whole hotel had flatulence. Then there is the lift, which shakes and rattles outside your room every time it goes up and down. Above all, there is the traffic. People will build hotels overlooking main squares, where all the traffic meets and passes – especially in Sweden; the trams, which clank and grind and squeak and roar until 12.30 a.m. and begin again their infernal din at 6 a.m.

I dwell on this point because it is a feature of almost all hotels, both at home and abroad. What, I want to know, is the use of a beautifully appointed bedroom if I can't sleep?

Mainly, however, my vow is due to nostalgia. I am never happy abroad for more than a very short time, because I begin to feel homesick. Almost immediately I go away from it I begin to long for and to feel love of England. (I suppose I love it at all times, but you can only long for what you haven't got.) For example, I love the English countryside, and expect every foreign countryside to look like England and can never forgive it because it does not.

I think of England's green face, its soft skies, its gentle contours – above all this time, I thought of the spring. I have long ago come

to the conclusion that there is no countryside abroad worth talking of. Sweden was one vast pine tree brooding over one continuous lake; Denmark one enormous cow grazing in one infinitely extended meadow. In England there is an endless variety of little hills and coppices, meadows and lanes and hedges, and woods and rivers.

And then, of course, there were the people I care for; how attractive they seemed "in absence"; how unimportant their faults. How unimportant, too, the faults of England – the snobbery, the queues, the irritations, the short tempers; in retrospect they seemed as nothing in the scales of the great longing to be home.

The Author's Patriotism

I suppose that at bottom I am intensely patriotic, and yet the things I care for are not the things which most Englishmen seem to find worthy of their admiration. For the Empire, I care nothing; all those territories upon which the sun that never sets swelters might, for me, not exist. For getting a start in the Industrial Revolution and becoming in my youth – we are so no more – the richest people in the world, I care less than nothing. I think the Industrial Revolution was the greatest disaster that ever happened to us.

What I love is a little England of small towns and quiet villages; a countryside which is a perfect blend of the works of nature and of man, in which live unassuming, friendly people who don't talk too much. Of course, this England that I love is fast disappearing; the towns eat into the countryside like cancers; roads are laid down like weals left by the whip lash of civilisation upon the fair face of the land; the immense variety of English trees are being cut down to make room for the uniform and alien pine. Yet this England that I love is the England that there has always been, and I still nourish the faith that something of it may still remain.

Whatever the reason, before a few days of absence are over, I

begin counting the days until my return; after a week I am, so far as my arithmetic permits, counting the hours. And this has happened to me, not once but a score of times, so that again and again before half a holiday is done I have come scuttling home in a frenzy of nostalgia. But this time engagements kept me on the treadmill of foreign travel; I couldn't come back when I wanted to, coming back was even better than I had expected. And once again I've vowed never to do it again.

In fact, if I never go again outside England and France – by the way, everybody should go to France, since every civilised human being has two countries, his own and France – I shall die happy.

On Sweden

What did I think of Sweden, I am asked. Well, I am no good at travellers' tales: besides, though the Swedes have most of the virtues, are clean, punctual, tidy, honest, dignified, and reliable – so much so that, if they could run the world as well as they run their own country (I wish we had the sense to let them do it) the world would be a better place – the Swedes are dull, and I, for a fortnight, ate so much that I became almost as dull as the Swedes.

I had been told that it would be cold – Stockholm is on the same latitude as Leningrad – and went muffled up like a mummy in overcoat and scarf and rugs and thick vests and pants. In fact, it was warm, sunny, and dry; the air was like a caress, and I took off clothes from the moment I arrived, in order to be caressed the more.

Stockholm is spacious. Space means, among other things, that the motor-car is robbed of its sting. I don't object to cars as such, in spite of what my detractors say about me. What I object to is too many cars in too little room. But here there are not too many; pedestrians walk about in peace. After space, what next? There

are always, I suppose, two points of interest in a foreign country : the people's outer surface and their inner life; in other words, the body and the spirit.

Let me say something, first, about the body. I suppose that in Sweden the meals were at all times outstanding. Now, to the half-starved Englishman, they are overwhelming. Never have I seen, rarely have I conceived, so much food. The Swedes are rather ashamed of this and play it down, telling you that there is not so much food in Sweden after all. But there is. And their hospitality is too much for their shame, so that in the very act of telling you that Sweden is a poor country they stuff you with food as if you were a goose being fattened for the Christmas table.

One begins with *smörgas-bordet*. This is a glorified *hors d'œuvre*, with sausage-meat, hard-boiled eggs, vegetables prepared with different kinds of sauces, and at least half a dozen different kinds of small fish. With the *smörgas-bordet* you drink schnapps – very alcoholic, like vodka, but nicer – and beer alternately. Many Englishmen think that this constitutes the main meal, but I, warned in advance, knew that it was only the preliminary. There follows a fish or an egg dish, then a meat dish with salad, vegetables, and sauces in which cream and wine are notable ingredients, topped off by a sweet, rising like Venus from a foam of cream and sugar. All this is washed down by sherry, red wine and brandy.

The Swedes, who have always been given to eating and drinking, justify themselves by saying that they have to drink a lot because of the rigours of the climate and the shyness of their temperaments. In fact, they are so afraid of themselves in this matter of drinking that, like us, they have been driven to hedge the business about with the most elaborate series of regulations and restrictions. For example, you cannot drink in a restaurant unless you have food at the same time; the more food, the more drink, or at any rate, the stronger drink, beer being, however, excluded from the restrictions. You cannot buy spirits or even wine to drink in your

home unless you are 25 years old, if a man, and 28 years old, if a woman. But if you are a married man you can take wine and spirits home at a much earlier age, presumably in order to enable you to tolerate being married.

For my part, I am in favour of eating when one drinks, but not in favour of compulsory restrictions prohibiting you from drinking *unless* you eat. Most people seem to be of the same opinion. At a Press conference which I attended on the day of my arrival the only public question of the day about which the Pressmen seemed interested was my views on the drink question.

"But isn't there anything else," I asked, "about which people in Stockholm are agitated?" Apparently there wasn't. "No political questions?" If there were, nobody seemed to know what they were. It is a happy nation that has no politics. Is Sweden happy in that sense, and if so, why?

Politics in Sweden

The Swedes, as I have already said, have all the virtues. They are kindly, hospitable, honest, clean, reliable, punctual, and tidy, and Sweden is, I suppose, about as far removed from Hell – I would not put it any higher than that – as any country in Europe today. A belief exists that Sweden is an example of Socialism without tears. This belief is a delusion.

As far as I could gather – and this is the one serious political question I ever heard discussed – the rich in Sweden are being deliberately taxed out of existence. The incidence of taxation bears even more hardly on them than it does with us. For example, if you have 500,000 krone (£25,000) a year you will pay 600,000 krone in taxes, which means, of course, that you will have to pay your taxes out of capital. (I asked what would happen if you had no capital; if, for example, you earned 600,000 krone as a suddenly

successful novelist. I was told that nobody had thought of that but that the Swedes being rigid in their respect for and application of laws, the novelist would be forced to take steps to prevent people from buying his books, if he did not want to be put into prison for not paying his taxes.)

All this bears very hardly upon big landowners. I stayed with a Swedish count whose house had been in his family for 500 years. It was a lovely place, full of atmosphere and pictures and old furniture. Every year, I was told, so much land had to be sold in order to pay taxes. Ultimately, the estates will be wasted away altogether and there will be no more big landowners. Nor is it only upon the rich that the taxation bears heavily. I heard the same stories as one hears in England about diminishing the incentive to work among working people, because all earnings above a certain level are "skimmed off."

In spite of all this, the Swedes seem to be an exceptionally happy people. There are, I think, two reasons for this. First, they are a small nation. This means that they have no slums and no poor. They can educate their children properly because there are not too many of them. There are enough hospitals for the sick, the towns do not extend too far into the country, and there is no problem of town planning. Above all, I saw none of the ugliness of poverty, and I was told there has never been much unemployment. Moreover, what with family allowances, pensions and various forms of insurance, and so on, Sweden has both the earliest and the most advanced social legislation of any country in the world. Now all this is comparatively easy if the number of people for whom the community has to provide is small. I deduce that if our population was as small as Sweden's, our social problems would be no greater than Sweden's.

The other reason for Swedish happiness is temperament. In Sweden the divorce rate is the highest in Europe, and so, incidentally, is the proportion of illegitimate children. One can get a

divorce within a year at the will of either party, and the population accordingly shuffles itself like a pack of cards. But the shuffling goes on quite happily without jealousy or resentment. There are no crimes of passion. Instead one hears of husbands giving farewell dinners to wives whom they have just divorced with the new husbands whom the wives are about to marry as chief guest. What temperaments, or rather, what lack of temperaments! It is easy, you might say, to run a country with people like that.

The Swedes say they are so shy. I must admit that it is impossible when lecturing to them to tell from the total lack of expression on their faces whether they understand one or not. And it is perilous to try a joke. They only light up and become human when they have had some drinks, which is perhaps why they drink such a lot.

On Relationship with America

It is impossible to travel abroad and not to try to think of ways and means of promoting good relationships between peoples of different nationalities.

On returning from Sweden, I am asked, how would you set about getting a better understanding between the British and American peoples?

I don't know the answer to this question. We got on pretty well in the nineteenth century, before there was all this coming and going to and fro, and meeting and communicating and explaining, and trying to understand, with the result that we only misunderstand, one another.

The obvious answer, then, seems to me to be that we should see not more of one another, but less. We are always being told that we are members of the same family, but, for my part, I have always found it easy to get on with my family if it is living in another part

of the country, still easier if it is living in another continent. On the other hand, if one is always meeting one's family, one is pretty well certain to come sooner or later to cross purposes.

Our common language is no small part of the difficulty. If we only spoke different languages we should not be deluded into thinking we were like one another. We should regard Americans as foreigners, the Americans would regard us as foreigners, and the people of each nation would accept the fact that the people of the other was more or less mad, which, after all, is what one always does in the case of foreigners. Because we speak the same tongue we first expect to be like one another, and then find out to our consternation that we are not alike. However, it is impracticable to expect the American to develop a different language for at least 100 years, and since, owing to the facilities of modern transport, intercourse is likely to grow greater and not less, I can only put it on record that I don't know what the answer is.

The Americans think the world belongs to them, which is tiresome enough: we behave as if we don't care two hoots whom it belongs to, which must be even more tiresome for the Americans. What they can't stand about us is our sublime consciousness of ineffable superiority, plus our continual boasting about being so modest and not boasting. This gives them a feeling of inferiority and they boast more than ever in the vain effort to get rid of it. What I can't stand about the Americans—but I can't begin to tell you the things I can't stand about the Americans.

